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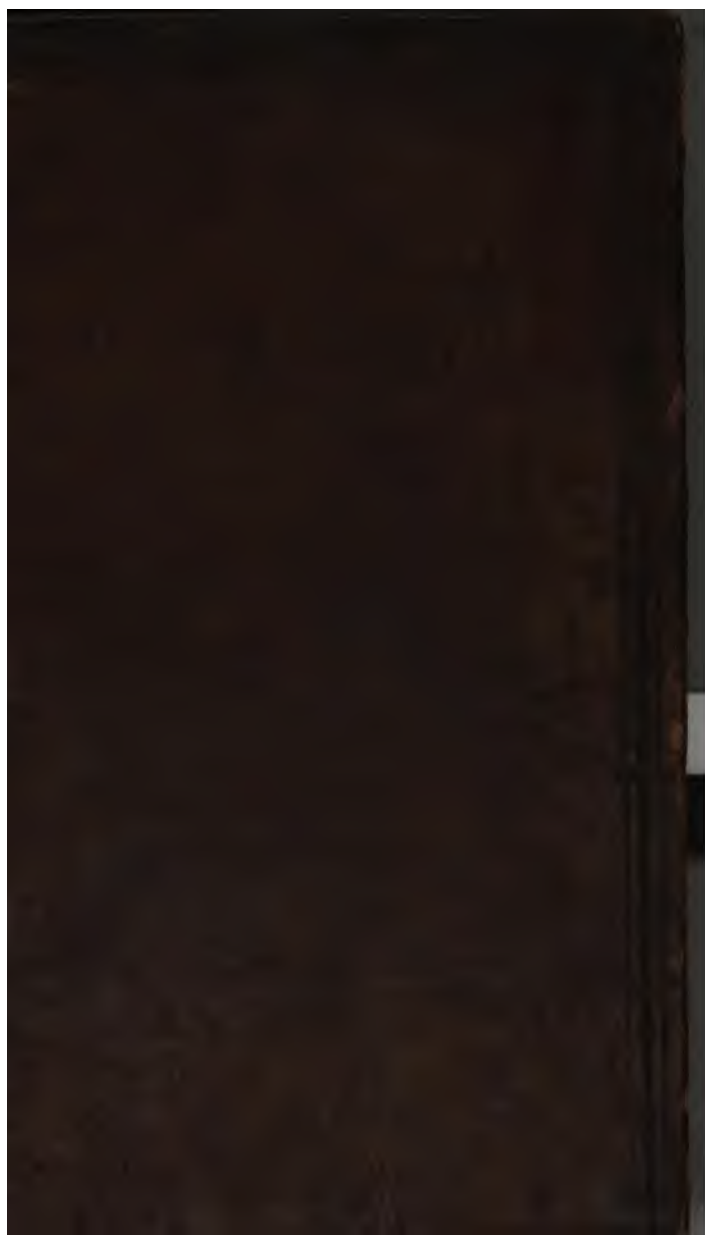
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Sophia H. Abbott -
Litchfield -



A BRIEFE
EXPOSITION
Of the whole Book of
CANTICLES,
O R,
SONG OF SOLOMON:

Lively describing the Estate of the Church
in all the Ages thereof, both Jewish
and Christian, to this day.

And modestly pointing at the Gloriousnesse of
the restored Estate of the Church of the Jewes,
and the happy access of the Gentiles, in the ap-
proaching dayes of Reformation, when the
Wall of Partition shall be taken away.

A Work very usefull and seasonable to every Christi-
an; but especially such as endeavour and thirst after the
settling of Church and State, according to the Rule
and Patternne of the Word of God.

Written by that Learned and Godly Divine *John*
Cotton, Batchelor of Divinity; and now Pastor of the
Congregation at *Boston* in *New-England*.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. Young* for *Charles Green*, and are to be
sold at the Signe of the Gun in *Iwie. Lane. 1648.*



THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.
CHAP. I.

THe Song of songs, which is Solomons.
2 Let him kisse me with the kisses
of his mouth : for thy love is better
then wine.

3 Because of the savour of thy good
ointments, thy Name is as ointment poured forth, there-
fore doe the Virgins love thee.

4 Draw me, we will run after thee : the King
bath brought me into his chambers : we will be glad
and rejoyce in thee, we will remember thy love more
then wine, the upright love thee.

5 I am blacke, but comely, (O ye daughters of
Jerusalem) as the Tents of Kedar, as the curtaines
of Solomon.

6 Looke not upon me because I am blacke, because
the

the Sunne hath looked upon me : my Mothers children were angry with me , they made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but my own Vineyard have I not kept.

7 Tell me, (O thou whom my soule loveth) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocke to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?

8 If thou know not (O thou fairest among women) goe thy way forth by the footsteps of thy flocke, and feed thy kiddes besides the shepheards tents.

9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaohs chariots.

10 Thy cheekes are comely with rowes of jewels, thy neck with chaines of gold.

11 We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver.

12 While the King sitteth at his table, my spike-nard spendeth forth the smell thereof.

13 A bundle of myrrhe is my welbeloved unto me, he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

14 My beloved is unto me , as a cluster of Camphire in the Vineyards of Engedi.

15 Behold, thou art faire my love : behold, thou art faire, and hast doves eyes.

16 Behold, thou art faire, my beloved, yea, pleasant : also our bed is green.

17 The beames of our house are Cedar, and our rafters of firre.

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant. 1. ver. 1. *The Song of songs, which is Solomons.*

Ver. 2. *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better then wine.*

IT was the manner of ancient times, at Espousalls and Nuptialls to indite and sing * (*Epithalamia*) love-songs: † The title of the 45. Psalme may seeme to be penned by one of the chiefe singers of the Temple, (who now were all of them Prophets; † *Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun,*) upon occasion of *Solomons* marriage with *Pharaohs* daughter; for though shee was a stranger by birth from the common-wealth of Israel, yet his marriage was lawfull with her: And therefore, notwithstanding this marriage, his love to God is still commended, ^b *Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt, and* ^c *Solomon loved the Lord, &c.* For indeed herein *Solomon* was,

First, a type of Christ, admitting the Gentiles into the fellowship of his marriage-bed.

Secondly, this *Pharaohs* daughter be-

* Ruth 4.
11, 12.
a 1st Sal. 45.

† 1 Chron.
25. 1. to 5.

b 1 King.
3. 1.
c verse 3.

1.

2.

d Psal. 45.
10. — 14.

came a Profelyte to the Jewish Religion, & *Hearken (Oh Daughter) and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine owne people, and thy fathers house, &c.*

Now, though that marriage song was penned upon that occasion; yet it ascendeth farre above all earthly respects of worldly marriage, and by a divine and heavenly workmanship sets forth a heavenly marriage-song betweene Christ and his Church: of like Argument was this song penned by *Solomon* himselfe; not to expresse his affections to *Pharaohs* daughter, or hers to him, or the good parts of either of them: no, nor the like respects to any *Shunamite* amongst the rest of his wives, as some have vainly conceived; for then how absurd and monstrous were some of his comparisons, likening his Spouse to a *company of horses in Pharaohs Chariot, her Head to Carmel, her Eyes to Fish-pooles, her Nose to a Tower; her Teeth to a flock of Sheep, her whole Selfe to a terrible Army with Banners* &c. But his scope is to describe the estate of the Church towards Christ, and his respect towards her, from his own time to the last judgement, as afterward it shall appeare.

Now,

Now, through this whole marriage-song this *Decorum* it keepeth, that though the calamities of the Church be as well described throughout this song, as the comfortable condition of the same in all ages; yet such dismall passages are veiled and shadowed under some sweet and amiable resemblances, lest the joy of a marriage feast should be darkened by unseasonable mention of so sad occurrences; neither are all the passages of the estate of the Church in every age here described, (for how can that be in so short a song?) but the chiefe heads of things in every age are sweetly, and shortly, and lively, not onely pointed at, but decyphered. These verses contain,

First, the title of the whole book, ver. 1.

Secondly, the description of the estate of the Church in the dayes, First, of *Salomon*, ver. 2.—4.

Secondly, of *Solomon* and *Rehoboam*, verse 5.

Thirdly, of *Rehoboam*, verse 6.—9.

In the title we have

First, the form of the book, It is a *Song*.

Secondly, the excellency of it, A *Song of songs*.

The title.

1

2

3

4

5

Title.

1

2

A 4

Thirdly,

3

Thirdly, the Author of it, *Which is Solomon.*

Col. 3. 6.

The Song of songs, &c. In *Coloss.* 3. 16. there is mention made,

1

First, of Psalmes.

2

Secondly, Hymnes.

3

Thirdly, spirituall Songs.

Psalmes.

Amongst the Hebrewes there were Psalmes made to be sung with Instruments, as well as with voyce, and contained arguments of all sorts, for Petition, Thanksgiving, and Instruction.

Songs.

Songs were chiefly made for the voice.

Hymnes.

Hymnes are properly praises of God: though any of these are sometimes put for all.

Use 1.

First, this doth let us see, that it were to be wished, that this Booke were turned into verse or meeter in each language, that we might sing the Canticles as the Hebrewes did.

Use 2.

Secondly, this teaches us to strive for such a gracious frame of spirit, that we might alwayes bee fitted to sing to God.

This Song containes the estate of the Church, as well in the worst as best times; yet *Solomon* can as well sing in

the

the misery of the Church, as in her prosperity. And* *David* hath as well Psalmes of his deep waters and calamities, as of his greatest deliverances. And the holy Ghost saith, *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes*: And though singing be chiefly fit and requisite in mirth, yet we should be fit also for a Psalm in our affliction. But we commonly in our ill houres are too fullen to sing, and in our merry moods, our spirits vanish away in carnall mirth and jolity; but whatsoever the estate of the Church be, we should have our spirits as ready to sing as to pray.

Thirdly, is reprov'd that ancient law and custome of the Synagogue, which prohibited young men (under thirty yeares of age) the reading and use of this Booke; but what age fitter for Songs then cheerfull youth? And further, the amorousnesse of the dittie will not stirre up wantonnesse in any age, if the words be well understood: but rather, by inflaming with heavenly love, will draw out, and burne up all earthly and carnall lust; and even as fire in the hand is drawne out by holding it to a stronger fire, or as the light and

heat

* Psal. 69.

2.

c Phil. 4. 4.

f Jam. 5.

13.

use 3.

heat of the Sunne extinguisheth a kitchen fire; so doth heavenly love to Christ extinguish base kitchen lusts.

Verse 1.

* Exod. 26
33.

1 King. 4.
32.

g 2 Sam.
23. 1.

h 1 King.
1. 47.

† Psal. 16.
56, 57, 58,
52.

i Psal. 12. 6

Reason 1.

A Song of songs: That is, a most excellent Song, the chiefest of Songs: as when they would expresse the holy place, they say, The Holy of holiest, * *The Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Servant of servants*, an Hebrew superlative; so this is the chiefest Song, first of all *Solomons* other Songs, even of his thousand and five.

Secondly, of all Songs without exception; for though *David* was in his time the sweet singer of Israel, yet as *Solomons* Throne exceeded his in all other magnificence: ^h so did his Name exceed his also; yet this is no disparagement to the other Songs; so neither, that some of *Dauids* Psalmes should be stiled [†] golden Psalmes: ⁱ All purified gold; yet some gold wrought more exquisitely then others, and finer engraven then others; even some portion of the pure and holy Word of God, more exquisitely penned and polished then other.

The first Reason why this Song is more excellent then others, is, because this Song speaketh not onely of the chiefest

chiefest matter, to wit, Christ and his Church; but also more largely then any of *Dauids* Psalmes, and with more store of more sweet and precious, exquisite and amiable resemblances, taken from the richest Jewels, the sweetest Spices, Gardens, Orchards, Vineyards, Wine-cellers, and the chiefest beauties of all the workes of God and man.

Secondly, this Song admitteth more varietie of interpretation then any other, and also of singular use: some have applied it to expresse the mutuall affection and fellowship between Christ and every Christian soule; some betweene Christ and the Catholique Church; some to particular Churches, from *Solomons* time to the last judgement. And there is an holy and usefull truth in each one of these interpretations; but the last doth exceedingly magnifie the wonderfull excellency of this Song, making it a divine abridgement of the Acts and Monuments of the Church. And that this book was chiefly penned to be such an historicall Prophesie or Propheticall history, may appear,

Reason 2.

First, by the correspondency, or suitability

sutablenesse of the words of this Song, to the events of each age.

2

Secondly, by the repetition of the same description, and other occurrences in divers parts of this Song, which would be a needlesse tautologie, if it were spoken of the same persons in the same time, as you may see if you compare *Chap. 4. 2.* with *6. 6.* and *2. 7.* with *3. 5.* and *8. 4. 3. 6.* with *8. 5.*

Reason 3.

Chap. 3. 3.
6. with Ch.
5. 7. 8. 9.

Thirdly, by the diversities of descriptions of some persons, which would intimate and imply a contradiction, if they were not spoken of severall times and severall persons.

Reason 4.
Chap. 3. 6.
and 6. 10.
and 8. 5.
Use 1.

Fourthly, by the sudden admiration of some new persons and occurrences.

First, wee may here see, the eldest sonne of Wisdome giveth the double portion of excellency to this Song above all others; yea, since the holy Ghost giveth it, it is not therefore onely Canonically Scripture, but an eminent portion of it. It were prophane blasphemy to preferre this Song above other Songs of holy Scripture, if it were not also given by divine inspiration as well as they: to preferre the invention of

man

man before the wisdom of God were sacrilegious madness. And although none of Gods ten proper names in Hebrew be once mentioned in this Song, yet that impeacheth not the authority of this Booke more then it doth of *Hester*, where no name of God is mentioned at all. Besides, this Booke is full of such names of God as sute more with the arguments; as *Welbeloved, Brother, Shepherd, O thou whom my soule loveth, the chiefest of ten thousand.*

Secondly, this must exhort us to a more studious reading and meditating of this Booke, as of a most excellent portion of holy Writ.

Thirdly, this shewes us, that as this Scripture is Canonically, so the Pen-man of it is a Canonically Saint in Heaven; for hee must needs be so, according to that (not of *Peters* successor, as the Papists would have it) but of *S. Peter* himselfe: *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost*: so that hee must needs be a Saint by *S. Peters* confession; and not he onely, but Christ himselfe saith, *All the Prophets are in the kingdome of God.* Now, all the Prophets came not neere

this

Chap. I. 7,
8, 9, and
5. 10.

Use 2.

Use 3.

k 2 Pet. 1.
21.

1 Luke 13.
28.

m 2 Sam.
7.14, 15.

this Prophet; and there was no Scripture but it was penned by a Propheticall and Apostolicall spirit; and though *Solomon* did fall, yet *m* *If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, &c.* Verse 15. *But my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.* If some say, By this it was meant that God would not take away his kingdom; to this it is answered, he did take it away, but he would not deale with him as he dealt with *Saul*: so then this telleth us *Solomon* is a Saint in Heaven.

The text
Ver. 1.

n 1 King. 4
29, 30.
Deut. 34.
1. — 4.

[*Which is Solomons.*] *Solomon* the penner of it, but a wiser then *Solomon* indited it. The holy Ghost maketh choice of his Instruments according to the use he had to put them to; to set forth the estate of his Church by the choicest treasures of nature: hee useth *Solomons* spirit, which *n* was as large as the sand of the sea shore. And as God led *Moses* to the top of mount Pisgah, to behold all the places and situations of Israel: so he lifted up *Solomons* spirit to the mountain of Activitie, (that I may so speake) where onely all times to come are present, to behold the estate of the Church throughout the present, and all after times.

This

This is to teach us, as it was said before, that *Solomon* is a canonized Saint, else he had not beene a Pen-man of Canonickall Scripture, canonized not by *Peters* pretended successors, who have shamefully erred in this kinde; but by * *Peter* himselfe, yea, by a greater then *Peter* or *Solomon*, even ° *Christ Jesus*: That promise reacheth further then to preferre *Solomon* before *Saul*, in reserving the kingdome to his posterity, which he tooke from *Saul*; for even from *Solomons* posterity, the kingdome was cut off in *Jechoniah*: the promise therefore of mercy to *Solomon* above *Saul*, reacheth to the bestowing of an heavenly kingdome upon him. Besides, in that place two blessings are promised,

First, Adoption, *I will be his father, &c.*

Secondly, establishment in Gods house and kingdome: so that if the latter promise should not evince his perseverance, yet the former doth.

Secondly, this is to stirre us up to the reading and meditation of this Booke, the more for the Pen-mans sake.

The 2, 3, & 4. verses sing and shew forth the estate of the Church in *Solomons* time.

Use 1.

* 2 Pet. 1.

21.

o Luke 13

28.

p 2 Sam. 7

24, 25.

2 Sam. 7.

12, 13, 14.

1

2

Use 2.

time. Verse 5. the estate of the Church as well in *Solomons* time as in *Rehoboams*. The verses following to the ninth, the estate of the Church in all the time of *Rehoboam*.

Solomons
time four
things.
1

In the Church of *Solomons* time, four passages are chiefly observable.

q Prov. 8.
34-35.

First, *Solomons* choyce of heavenly wisdom, by which chiefly wee enjoy sweet and familiar fellowship with God, q 1 King. 3. 5. to 10. This is expressed, verse 2.

2
Verse 3.

Secondly, the sweet savour and fame of *Solomons* gifts and graces, to the winning of the love and admiration of the sons of men.

3
Verse 4.

Thirdly, the drawing and gathering of all Israel to the Kings chambers, the courts of *Solomons* Temple: or his care to bring on his people to the publick Worship of God, and their respect of him in regard thereof.

4
Verse 5.

Fourthly, the fall and deformity of the Church, by Idolatrous worship, and toleration thereof in many; and yet the keeping of the native beauty of the Church in many others.

Verse 2.

[Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth,

month, &c.] It is a prayer of the Church, or (which is all one) some chiefe member of it, for a pledge of Christs sweet and familiar acquaintance, and love, and fellowship with her: *Kisses* are pledges and incentives of love. *Men shall kisse his lips that answereth upright words.* This is the effect of upright Answers, men kisse his lips; but God kissing a mans lips, is the cause of mans answering upright words; his breathing into our mouths a right answer, maketh us speake accordingly: as, on the contrary, when one answers perversly, unjustly, erroneously, Satan then hath kissed them with his kisses, hee hath sitten as a * lying spirit in their mouths.

1 Pro. 24.
26.

* 1 King.
22, 23, 24.

[*The kisses of his mouth,*] which is more then the *kisses of his lips*; the one is a silent gesture of love, the other implyeth also amiable speeches, when Christ,

First, by the voyce of his Word, or

1

Secondly, by the breath of his spirit, doth either,

2

First, put wisdom or grace into our hearts, or

3

Secondly, speake peace or comfort to our soules.

Psalm 119.
98.—110.
2

¶ Isa. 57.
19.

¶ Prov. 17.

¶ Eccles.
12. 13.

* Prov. 8.

22-35.

Mat. 3. 17.

¶ Prov. 3. 17

* Psa. 104.

15. & 4.

6. 7.

Prov. 3. 13.

— 15. &

31. 6, 7.

Jud. 9. 13.

† 1 King. 3

5, 9, 11.

2 Chron.

1. 7, 10, 11.

Pro. 16. 10

¶ *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, &c.* Solomons wisdom is the grace of God, as wickednesse is folly; ¶ *The beginning of this wisdom is the feare of God, ¶ the end of it is the keeping of Gods Commandments.* This wisdom who so findes, findes Christ, * the wisdom of the Father, in whom God is well pleased with us, and in whom he (as it were) kisseth us: this wisdom doth not only enable us to walk godlily to our salvation, but likewise fits us to goe in and out before our families, before our people, and so enlarges us to all duties of our callings: And to walk in the wayes of this wisdom, brings peace to our soules, and to those that live under us. ¶ *All her paths are peace.*

For thy love is better then wine.] The favour of God in giving wisdom, and thereby peace to a mans selfe and others depending on him, is more worth then wine; (that is) then whatsoever makes the heart of man * glad. This prayer was powred out by Solomon, the chiefest member of the Church in this time, when he prayed for wisdom, † and preferred it before long life, riches, victory over his enemies, &c.

Or

Or else this whole verse may expresse the desire of the Church to *Solomon*, that he would expresse his love to her by his divine Sentences, * and Bookes, and Songs, which are better then their civill peace, † then the sitting under their own Vine and Fig-tree.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments. } Good ointments are the gifts and graces of Gods Spirit, ^a *But the anointing which ye have received of him, &c.* so called, because they heale a broken heart as ^b oyle: the oyle of Gods grace heals the bruises of the soule.

Secondly, as oyle doth make the face to shine, ^c so doe they.

Thirdly, ^d as by the holy oyles all the vessels of the Tabernacle were consecrated; so by these graces all the vessels of mercy are consecrated to God.

Fourthly, by the oyntment were anointed to their offices ^e Kings, ^f Priests, ^g and some Prophets; ^h so by these graces are we anointed to God our Father in Christ, ⁱ Kings, Priests, and Prophets. Savour is the manifestation of these graces, as ointments are manifested by their savour.

Thy name is as an oyntment poured forth. }

B 2

Thar

* Eccles.
12.9.

† 1 Kin.4.
25.

Verse 3.

a Joh.2.27

b Luke 10.
34.
I sa.61.3.

c Psa.104
15.
Eccles. 8. 1.
d Exo.10.
23.31.

e 1 Sam.
16.3. &
10.1.

f Exod.40
13,15.

g 1 King.
19.16.

h A.G.1.8.
& 2.4,7.

i Rev. 1.6.
Joh. 11.3.

Verse 3.

k Can. 8. 8

1 Can. 6. 8

Verse 3.

m 1 King.

28. & 4.

31, 34. &

5. 7. & 10.

1, 7, 8, 9.

n 1 King.

10. 1, 2.

o 1 King.

5. 7.

Verse 4.

That is, precious, sweet, and famously renowned; *Therefore doe the Virgins love thee.* The Virgins in this Song are such as Christ hath not yet espoused to himselfe, nor spoken for in way of marriage; such as carnall Jewes, or the Gentiles.

Love thee.] That is,

First, honourably esteem thee.

Secondly, affect thy fight and fellowship.

Thirdly, seeke after thee. ^m This was fulfilled in *Solomon*: his owne people revered him, even all of them; his name was famous in all nations round about him: all the Kings sent to him, and of all people, some came to hear his wisdom.

ⁿ The Queen of Sheba cometh from the uttermost parts of the earth to heare it, & counteth his people happy under it: *Hiram* King of Tyre blessed God for his wisdom.

Draw me.] It may well be the speech of *Solomon* to Christ, praying that Christ would draw him to the Father, neer unto him in holy duties, and promising to bring all the People to run with him after God. Or it may be the speech of the Church to *Solomon*, desiring him to draw them together, by publick edicts and

pro-

proclamations, to the solemn duties of Gods worship, and promising to come freely, to runne together willingly in the times of such assemblies; which was done P.

The King hath brought me into his chambers.] That is, into those bride-chambers, where Christ familiarly converseth with them; which were three.

First, the Tabernacle at Gibeon.

Secondly, the Ark at Jerusalem.

Thirdly, the Temple.

Into these, ⁹ *Solomon* brought the whole congregation of Israel to solemn sacrifices.

The words following in this verse, shew a three-fold respect which the people beare to *Solomon*.

First, they rejoyced in him.

Secondly, they remember his love better then wine.

Thirdly, the upright love him.

Their rejoycing in him, is recorded: their remembrance of his love more then wine, is there also implied; for departing from the meeting with such glad hearts; they afterward remembered the comfort thereof, as more blessed then the peace-

p 2 Chro.
2. 2, 3.
Verse 4.

q 2 Chro.
1. 2. — 6.
1 King. 8.
5. — 14.
— 63.

r 1 King.
8. 66.

able living under their owne Vine and Fig-tree. The love of the upright to him continued all his time, even when his wives, and hollow-hearted subjects flattered him, and enticed him to toleration of Idolatrie.

Verse 2.

But consider further, that *Solomon*, when hee is here set forth as the desire, praise, and blessednesse of all his people, he is then a type of Christ, greater then *Solomon*; whose heavenly fellowship and instruction, the Church desires above wine: whose graces are excellent, and procuring him love and renowne, of whom the Church prayeth to be drawn, and who leadeth us to fellowship with God in holy worship; whom therefore the people rejoyce in, and remember his love above wine: the upright love him.

Use 1.

This, first doth shew us the happy estate of a Church or Common-wealth, when men of place labour not for preferments or worldly profits, for honour or long life, but for wise and understanding hearts, that may go in and out before the people in their callings; when they desire to be kissed with the kisses of Gods mouth, that he would breath into them

such

such graces as be needfull for their places.

Secondly, this sheweth what procures a Magistrate love and reputation; when, being enriched with Gods graces, as sweet oyntments, hee manifesteth the sweet savour thereof in all his administrations. If any man desire a good name, if any man desires love and respect, this is the way to get it; fill your hearts with the good gifts and graces of God; let Gods grace shew forth it selfe in your speeches, in your answers, in your practices; this oyntment will be stronger to get a good name, then any other noysom thing to hinder it. The Virgins will love you, for they rejoyce at your faith; *And by faith our elders were well reported of.* By these, *Solomon* got a good name all the world over.

Use 2.

Heb. 11. 2

Thirdly, this is to teach a Magistrate to draw on the people to holy duties, by all meanes he can, by his Proclamations, Lawes, and Examples.

Use 3.

Fourthly, to shew that the greatest comfort of subjects, and the strongest love to knit them in all hearty affections to their Prince, is his forwardnesse in drawing them on, and leading them an

Use 4.

Verse 4.

end to the holy duties of Gods worship.

Draw me, and I will runne after thee.]

If *Salomon* once be drawne, all the people will come after rejoycing, when they shall see the Magistrate come.

Use 5.

Fifthly, to shew us a signe of a true spouse of Christ; such a one preferreth fellowship with him above all things, delighting in his company, in his ordinances.

Verse 2.

d Phil. 3.

7, 8.

e Psal. 73.

25.

Text Ver.

5. to 9.

Thus did *Paul*, & *I count all things losse and dresse for Christ*. So *David*, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?*

I am blacke, yet comely, &c.

In these verses is described the estate of the Church.

Verse 5.

First, of *Israel and Judah*, in the last dayes of *Solomon*, and then of *Rehoboam*.

Verse 6.

Secondly, of *Judah alone*.

Ver. 7, 8.

Thirdly, of *Israel alone* after the Apostasie of the ten tribes.

Verse 9.

Fourthly, of *Judah alone*, in respect of his civill condition under the service of the King of Egypt.

Verse 5.

I am blacke, &c.] The Church is set forth by a double adjunction, the one contrary to the other; *I am black*; yet *comely*; and both these by comparison:

Blacke.

First, *black*, as the tents of *Kedar*.

Secondly,

Secondly, *comely*, as the curtaines or hangings of Solomon.

First, *black*, by the fall of Solomon &c.

Secondly, by the folly of Rehoboam h.

Thirdly,

1. By Profanenesse.

2. By Schisme.

3. By Apostasie.

4. By the Rebellion of the ten tribes i.

Yet comely,]

First, by the present purity of Gods ordinances in the Temple k.

Secondly, the constancy of the upright in cleaving to God, to the King, to the house of God, and *David*; the which was done in profession by whole Judah and Benjamin, and the Israelites inhabiting in the Cities of Judah, but in truth, by the upright l.

Yee Daughters of Jerusalem, &c.]

Children of the Church are called Daughters rather than Sons, as being prepared as a pure Virgin for Christ their husband m.

As the tents of Kedar, &c.] That is, of the Arabians, who were called Scenith, or Nomede, for that they wandred up and downe, feeding their flocks in

tents,

g 1 King.

11.4,9.

h 1 King.

12.14,15.

i 1 Kin. 12.

16,18,19.

Comely.

k Psal. 48.

1,2.

2 Chr. 13.

10,—12.

l 1 Kin. 12.

17,20,23.

m 2 Cor.

11.2.

degrees, though they made her the keeper of the vineyards.

Verse 6.:

Look not upon me.] That is,

First, with a scorching eye, Sun-burning me, making me still more blacke by your disdain and separation; as the Sun is said to looke upon, that is, with a scorching eye.

o Job 28.7

Secondly, with a piercing eye, as the Vultures doe, whereof *Job* speaketh, using the same word here used of the Sun, which spieth out what he may fasten upon, any corruption or carrion.

Verse 6.
p Psal. 84.
11.

The Sunne.] That is, God hath looked upon me with a scorching eye, in displeasure; for he was angry with *Solomon*.

q 1 Kin. 11
9. & 12. 24

It came not by chance, or civill causes in polity, but by divine procurement; and therefore the daughters of Jerusalem to make such an use of it as not to alienate themselves the more from God by it: that which cometh from God should draw us nearer to God; He did it to set us more Kings in the Common-wealth, as *Solomon* had more Gods in the Church.

Verse 6.

r 1 King.
12. 16.

The sonnes of my mother were angry with me.] That is, the ten tribes were offended: yea this anger of the tribes was excessive.

essive, when it brake forth into such extremity; and therefore they rather to be reproved, then the Church disdained.

They made me the keeper of the Vines.]

First, God^s.

Secondly, all the tribes.

Of the Vines.] That is, of all the Churches^u.

But mine owne Vineyard have I not kept.]

That is, not the Churches of Judah and Jerusalem, Idolatry and Superstition creeping in.

No not the Vines of mine own house, my wives^{*} from falling to Idolatry, and seducing my selfe to toleration of it.

Tell me, Oh thou, &c.] This verse containeth,

First, a Prayer of the faithfull dispersed throughout the ten tribes, and commanded by *Jeroboam* to goe no more to worship at Jerusalem, but to goe to Dan and Bethel, desiring to know whither to resort to find Christ feeding his sheep^{*} *that heare his voyce.*

Secondly, a Reason to prevent her turning aside to superstitious worship, by following such Teachers as will not be subordinate to Christ, depending upon his

f 1 Chron.

28. 4.— 6.

t 2 Sam. 5.

3.

u Ps. 80. 2.

Isa. 5. 1.

Mat. 22. 33

* Ps. 128. 3

Verse 7.

a John 10.
27, 28.

b 1 King.

12. 28, 31.

Verse 8.

his direction ; but companions with him
usurping to prescribe with like authority
as himselfe in his worship ^b.

If you know not.] This verse contains
Christs answer : where observe,

First , a Compellation , *Oh thou false
amongst women.*

Secondly, a Supposition, *If thou know
not* : as if he should say , it is much that
shouldest not know.

Thirdly , a Direction to follow in
case,

c 2 Chro.

11. 13, 14,

16.

First, the footsteps of the true Shee-
Christ, who went up all to Jerusalem

d 2 Chro.

13-16, 11.

Secondly, the tents of the Shephe-
the lawfull Priests, who were there a

d There they feed the kids and yo-
ones , who else might in time grow r-
mish and rank with superstitious and
Ministers.

Verse 9.

I have compared thee.] Here the c-
estate of the Church of Judah is de-
bed ; for after that the recourse of
faithfull Priests and Levites had stren-
ned the hand of *Rehoboam*, * he fell av-
and most of Israel with him : where
God sent *Pharaoh Shishak* (for all
Kings of Egypt were called *Pharaohs*

* 2 Chro.

11. 17. &

12. 1, 2.

2 Chro. 12

2, 8, 9. ver.

8, 9.

ful

subdue them to his service. So then the Church of Judah is here set forth,

First, by her service to *Pharaoh*, as if, like horses, they drew in *Pharaohs* triumphant chariot d. *Iosephus* saith, this *Shishak* was *Sesoftris*, of whom *Herodotus* speakes: yea, of him saith *Diodorus Siculus*, that he caused Kings as horses to draw in his chariots.

d 2 Chro.
12.8.

Secondly, by her acceptance to God in this service; *I have compared thee to the company of my horses*: and so in the Hebrew, because they had submitted themselves under Gods just hand e. If *Solomon* had spoken of any of his wives or concubines, it had been a monstrous and absurd comparison to liken them to coach-horses. Also because this is a marriage-song, he setteth downe expressly no dismall thing to interrupt bride-chamber joy, but vaileth the service under this magnificent comparison darkly.

e 2 Chro.
12.6, 12.

This shewes us what it is that makes the Church blacke, wherein the deformity of it stands, in the fall and sins of the people, and of the Princes, in declining to Idolatry in their folly, schismes, and rents from their mother; profanenesse, apo-

use 3.

stasie,

stasie, and rebellion in the Church and Common-wealth. These doe darken the fairest Churches.

If *Solomon* shall set up other Gods, God will set up forain Princes in his kingdome. If he and his people will serve other gods, God will cause his Princes to draw in forain Princes chariots: if we be at unity with other gods, God will be at enmity with us.

use 2.

Secondly, this doth shew us there may be a true comely Church in the midst of such deformities, yet the true Church of God in the greatest darkness is alwaies comely. It is not the sins of Princes and people that can take away the Churches comelinese; they may bring blacknesse upon her, like *to the tents of Kedar*: but draw these curtaines aside, and you shall finde that Gods Church is comely, like to the *curtains of Salomon*. Run we not therefore from the Church because of her blacknesse, but run to her, and embrace her in her most sad defections.

use 3.

Thirdly, to teach the children of the Church not to separate from the Church for corruption sake; not to looke onely at her corruptions, but to see her comelinese.

nesse also; and not adde affliction to the afflicted: much lesse are we to think they in Bohemia, and in the Palatinate, are no Churches, for that they are now sunne-burnt. The sun, even God, hath looked upon them; and it is not their mothers children, but the bastards of the Roman Harlot have been angry with her. Let us not then look at them with a vultures eye, as though we would behold nothing but corruption and carrion: nor with a scorching eye, make them more black: but with a child-like eye, to pity them for their calamity and blacknesse which is befallen them.

Fourthly, observe that the calamities of the Church spring not out of the dust, but it is God that causeth darknesse upon the Church: yea, to speake reverently, it is he that lookes at her with a scorching eye; he searcheth her sinnes, and, finding them out, doth blast her that she is tann'd and sun-burnt. If then it be Gods hand, let us pity the Church so much the more, and strive with God to renew the light of his countenance upon her.

Fifthly, it was a sin in them to be angry with the Church, as some of the Se-

use 4.

use 5.

Secondly, where you find faithfull Ministers, Priests, as *Aarons* sons, and Levites anointed with heavenly graces; thither carry your kids, there plant your families to be fed under such shepherds.

Use 9.
Verse 9.

Lastly, wee may see here when the Church neglects Gods service, God gives her up to the service of forain Princes, to draw as horses in *Pharaohs* chariots: and yet being humbled for this, God will have mercy on her, and so dispose of it, that her service shall not be base, for God will make them to draw his yoke, though they draw it in the yoke of torain Princes, as *Rehoboam* and his people did f.

f 2 Chro.
12. 2, 4,
8, 9.
Verse 10.
to end.

Thy cheeks are comely with rowes of jewels.] The estate of the Church is here described, as it was in the dayes of *Abijam*, in these words, *Thy cheekes are comely with jewels*; and as it was in the dayes of *Asa*, both in the same words, and in the words following to the end of Verse 11.

Thy cheeks.] That is, the outward face of the Church are comely with rowes of jewels: that is, with keeping their right place and order, and manner of Gods owne ordinances.

This Abijam proclaimeth himself to all
the

the house of Israel : *8 But as for us (saith he) the Lord is our God, we have not forsaken him; the Priests which minister unto the Lord are the sons of Aaron; and the Levites waite upon that businesse, and they burne unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense : the shew-bread also they set in order upon the pure table.*

g 2 Chro.
3. 10, 11,
12.

It was not so with the House of Israel, though *Abijahs* heart was not so upright as *Dauids* ^h; yet the outward face of the Church, her cheekes (as it were) were comely with the orderly keeping and observing the ordinances of God : yea, and comely also was the face of the Church looking up to God in distresse, ⁱ which moved him to deliver you from *Ieroboam*.

Verse 8, 9.
h 1 King
15. 3.

Thy neck with chaines of gold.]

i 2 Chro.
13. 12, 18.

Verse 10.

Chaines of gold are wholesome lawes, binding like chaines, to keep the worship of God and true Religion pure as gold; such lawes are called chaines. ^k This was done in the dayes of *Asa*, when he removed the Altars of the strange gods, pulling down the high places, breaking the Images, and cutting down the Groves; commanded Judah to seeke the Lord God of their fathers, and the people willingly

k Pl. 149.
8.

l 2 Chro.

14. 2, 3, 4,
5. & 15.

12. — 15.

Verse 11.

submitted themselves ^l to enter into a covenant or law, that upon pain of death all the people should seek the Lord onely.

We will make thee.] This sheweth the forwardnesse of the people to joyne with *Asa* in reforming Religion, and adorning the Church, as is recorded ^m.

m 2 Chro.

15. 10, 16.

Verse 11.

Borders of gold.] That is, the borders of the kingdome, pure as gold by cleansing and putting away all the Idols out of all quarters of Judah, yea, and of Benjamin also, and mount Ephraim, the very skirts, and frontiers, and borders of the kingdome ⁿ.

n 2 Chro.

15. 8.

Verse 11.

Studs of silver.] In workes of gold, are such eminent knobs as adorne the workes with variety of colours, and metall, and workmanship ^o.

o Pro. 15.

11.

Such like eminent works which did adorn *Asa's* reformation of the Church, even to the very borders, were these three.

3. Things.

First, his renewing of the Altars of the Lord before the Porch ^p.

p 2 Chro.

15. 8.

Secondly, the deposing of his mother from her Regency, for her Idolatrie sake, and defacing her Idoll ^q.

q 2 Chro.

15. 16.

Thirdly, the consecrating, and bringing into Gods house, his fathers and his own

dedi-

dedicated Vessels of gold and silver †.

While the King sitteth at his table.] That is, whiles *Iehosaphat* sits at rest and peace, refreshing himselfe at home, † God establishing his kingdome in his hand, and giving him riches & honors in abundance.

My spikenard.] An ointment of all others most precious, * of all other spices *spikenard* is of greatest estimation. This the Apostle *Iohn* calleth very costly, wherewith our Saviour Christ was anointed by *Mary*.

By *spikenard* is here meant the preaching of the Word, which is of all favours the most precious, even the favour of life unto life.

When *Iehosaphat* was established in rest and peace, he sent forth the Priests and Levites, to carry the sweet favour of the word throughout all the cities of *Judah* †.

A bundle of myrrh.] Myrrh is an odoriferous tree, that sweateth out a sweet gumme called *Stacte*, which is preferred before all others.

This gum is also called from the tree Myrrh, his smell is strong and fragrant; and fit to preserve from putrefaction; and it is of much use in embalming, and God himself recounteth it amongst the principal spices †.

† 2 Chro.
15. 18.

Verse 12.

† 2 Chro.
17. 15.

Verse 12.

* Plin. lib

11. ca. 12.

Idem ibid.

2 Cor. 2.
16.

† 2 Chro.
17. 8, 9.

Verse 13.

Plin. lib.

12. ca. 16.

† Exod. 30.

23.

Verse 13.
1 1st. 2. 2.

2 2 Chro.
17. 7.

u 2 Chro.
19. 5.
—12.

* 2 Chro.
19. 3, 4.
Verse 14.

Betweene my breasts.] The breasts are those that give milk, the sincere milke of the Word to the Churches children, to wit, the Priests and Levites. These when *Jehosaphat* sent forth to give milke to the cities of Judah, he sent with them a company of Noblemen, religious Princes, who added the more authority to the Priests and Levites, and are therefore themselves said to teach in the cities of Judah^r. Thus these Princes were as a bundle of Myrrh amongst the Priests and the Levites, to decide all controversies amongst the people, both in matters concerning God and the King; to preserve the people, and one another free from corruption in all matters, whether of Religion or civill Justice^u. Yea, and *Jehosaphat* himselfe representing Christ the Churches welbeloved upon earth, he rested in the bosome of the Church as a bundle of Myrrh, sweet, and strongly preserving the people from corruption: from Beersheba to mount Ephraim hee went about, throughout all the people, to bring them backe againe to the purity of Gods worship^{*}.

As a cluster of camphire.] Camphire is

a shrub for smell like unto spikenard, wasting the obstruction of the spleene, and by the very smell of it making men *vegetiores*, and *firmitiores*, more lively and more strong; yea, and available also against the biting of serpents: such was Christ to his Church; when the children of *Moab* and *Ammon*, and mount *Seir*, gathered themselves together against the children of Israel in Engedi; for by the ministry of *Jehaziel*, he made *Jehosaphat* and his people,

First, more strong in faith, to rest on God and his Word.

Secondly, more lively and heartily to praise God: yea, and he saved them from their enemies, themselves not striking a stroke; though their enemies the breed of the old serpent put them before in great feare.

Behold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire.] The doubling of the words expresseth the superlative degree, by an usuall Hebraisme, *faire faire*, that is, very faire: which sheweth the estate of the Church in *Hezekiahs* time, who returned and set the Priests and Levites in their courses, restored their burnt sacrifices and

Plin. lib.
21. ca. 18.

2 Chron.
20. 12.

2 Chron.
20. 14, 15,
16.—20.

verse 21,
22, 23, 24.

verse 3, 12

Verse 15.

obla-

2 Chron.
29. & 30.
& 31. ver.
1, 2.

Verse 15.
Plin. lib.
10. cap. 34.

2 King.
18. 49

Verse 16.

oblations, sanctified the Priests, called all the people to the Passeeover, prayed for their healing, tooke away all the Images, Groves, and high Places.

Thou hast doves eyes.] That is, chaste and loathing uncleannesse, as *Pliny* reports the doves to be. *Hezekiah* loathed even the monuments of Idolatry, even the brazen Serpent, (though sometimes Gods ordinance) when once the people went a whoring after it: so by this means, abuses crept into the Church, in the dayes of *Foram*, *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, are not recorded till they come to be cleansed, lest the joy of the marriage-song should be darkened by the mention of so sad occurrences; whence also it is, that the abuses that crept in after the death of *Hezekiah*, in the dayes of *Manasseh* and *Ammon*, are not mentioned till their cleansing came, recorded in the dayes of *Iosiah*.

Behold, thou art faire my beloved, yea pleasant, also our bed is green.] This is the estate of the Church in the dayes of good *Iosiah*, who reformed it to the like estate of purity and beauty as in the dayes of *Hezekiah*, yea, in this he excèeded him, in taking away the high places which

Solomon

Solomon had built for his wives Idols , as also some other corruptions of *Ahaz*, ver. 12. and besides , he made all the people to worship the Lord onely , and to serve him *.

2 King.
23. 13.

Yea pleasant.] It being more then faire, so young a man to work so great a worke of reformation.

* 2 Chron.
34. 32, 33.
2 Chr. 34.
1. — 7.

Our bed is greene.] The house of God was the Temple , the bed in the house were the ordinances of God , wherein God was wont familiarly to embrace his spouse, and she him.

These in *Josiah*s time flourished in greatest purity, † so that there was no Passcover like unto his.

† 2 Chron.
35. 18.

Our bed is green.] It is an allusion to the spring time , when the worship of God began to flourish againe , after a winter time of miry and dirty pollutions.

The beames of our house are cedar , and our rafters (or walls, or galleries) of firre.] These words set out the beauty of the Church, in regard of the repaires of the Temple made by *Josiah*.

Verse 17:

2 Chro. 34
8, 14.

The use is to observe the severall beauties and ornaments of the Church, which are,

use 1.

First,

First, to enjoy each ordinance of God in his ranke and place : it is as if the cheekes , or open face of the Church were decked with rowes of jewels. *Ferboam* made Priests of the basest of the people ; and such defect or corruption of Gods ordinances , is a blemish conspicuous in the face of the Church.

use 2.

Secondly , good Kings ought to put upon their people wholesome Lawes, and strait binding to the purity of Religion and the worship of God : it is no impeachment to their Christian liberty as Anabaptists dote , but an ornament to their beauty, making their necks comely as with chaines of gold. It was the commandement of *Asa*, * *Whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel , should be put to death.* † *And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the Countries that pertained to the children of Israel , and made all that were present to serve, even to serve the Lord their God.*

* 2 Chro.
15.13.

† 2 Chro.
34.33.

use 3.

Thirdly , people to be ready to binde themselves by solemn covenant and oath to keep such Lawes , and to assist their Princes in cleansing their uttermost borders and corners of the kingdome from
Super-

Superstition and Idolatry ; and it is no impeachment of Christian liberty to bow to Christian Lawes : yea, it is the beauty of a Christian Church to weare those chaines, those Lawes, which were made for the good of the Church , and it was their profaneness and rebellion that say,
** Let us break their bands asunder , and cast away their cords from us.*

* Psa. 2. 3.

Use 4.

Fourthly, Princes to send forth favoury and gracious Ministers into all quarters of their dominions , that all their people may taste and feele how sweet the preaching of the Word is. This is the ornament of a Church, when Christian Princes so provide, that all places may be furnished with preaching Ministers ; this is to open a box of spikenard that the smell thereof may flow forth ; but to leave them relished with the dregs of Superstition, this is a blemish.

Fifthly, to see that the Nobles and Magistrates countenance Priests and Levites, and by their authority to give the free passage to the Word , and to prevent disturbances which else might be offered to Ministers in their Churches , yea, all Magistrates to prevent corruptions in matters,

Use 5.
 Verse 13.

matters, whether of Religion or civill Justice, is as if a bundle of Myrrh should lodge in the breasts of the Church.

Use 6.

Sixthly, the Lord Jesus to refresh and strengthen the hearts and spirits of his people in publicke calamities; and to save them from the malignity and venome thereof, he is then as a cluster of camphire to the Church in the vineyards of Engedi, as he was to *Iehosaphat* and his people * when they knew not what to do. Christ is an ornament, and encourageth both Priest, Prophet, and Prince, to sing a Psalm of Thanksgiving. And suppose enemies should be as a cluster in the border of the Church, how easie a thing is it for God to strengthen, and be as a cluster of camphire, to strengthen and encourage them against these biting serpents.

* 2 Chro.
20. 12.

Verse 22.

Use 7.

Seventhly, not to foster and tolerate inveterate corruptions, though received from worthy Ancestors, but to hate all abuses in Gods worship, even the very monuments of Idolatry, and to take them away, as *Hezekiah* did the brazen Serpent, and to set each ordinance of God in his place: the Church then is very fair, she hath doves eyes.

2 King.
18. 4.

Eightly,

ightly, young Princes to begin be-
s to lift up their hearts to redresse a-
s in the Church, to imitate the best
eir predecessors; yea, and to go be-
d them, as *Josiah* did, and to restore
ls worship to her native beauty and
grity. It is a faire, yea, a pleasant
g to behold this forwardnesse in any;
h more in young Princes.

Use 8.

Ninthly, to enjoy the worship of God,
ged from all Superstition, Idolatry,
from all devices of men; it is as if a
were greene, fresh, flourishing and
full: in such worship Christ delights
eveale and communicate himselfe fa-
iarly with his people, and loveth not
ome into a harlots bed, decked with
laces of tapestrie of Egypt.

Use 9.

Tenthly, suppose the Church againe
l againe be laid wast, so that in stead of
nphire is Masse and Idolatry, it is an
ie thing with God to send a *Josiah*, to
t out such Superstitions, that though
ses crept into the Church for three or
r Princes lives, yet God can cleanse
l reform her, as he did in *Josiah's* time.
d lookes not at the corruptions of his
urch, thereby to loath her, but to heal
her.

Pro. 7.16.

Use 10.

her, and thereby to glorifie his grace in her recovery, rather then his holinesse in the discovery of her pollutions.

The bed is here mentioned in the spring of her flourishing, when it began to wax green, not in the winter season of her dirty pollutions, and before, the chaste eyes of the dove recorded, abhorring uncleannesse, not the eyes full of adultery, bringing spirituall pollutions into the Church: when there is any Superstitious worship, there it is overspread with winter, but when it is purged, then is the bed green; when Gods ordinances are kept pure, there Christ delighteth to be.

Eleventhly, it is an ornament of the Church to restore her with beames of cedar, and her walls or galleries with firre: cedar is famous for durablenesse, enduring even to eternity, saith *Pliny*: firre is acceptable for his sweetnesse, and while he groweth, for his heighth, streightnesse and perpetuall greennesse: *Solomon* house or Temple was of old a lively type, partly,

First, of the humane body of Christ, the Temple of the Deity.

Secondly, of the mysticall body of Christ,

2. Pet. 2.
14.

Vsc 4.

Plin. lib.
13. cap. 5.
16, 41.

Joh. 2. 19.
21.
Col. 2. 9.

Christ, his Church or congregation,
 1 Cor. 3. 16. Christs humane body never
 decayeth, and therefore needeth no repairing:
 his mysticall body the Church, if it fall into
 decay through corruption of Doctrine or
 Worship, it may be most fitly repaired;

1 Cor. 3.
 16. & 6.
 19.

First, by laying in the walls of the Church
 such solid and eternall truths of God, as may
 hold up the walls of the building.

Thus *Luther* restored the Church by laying this
 beame of cedar, the Doctrine of free Justification
 by Christ.

Luther.

Secondly, by setting up such worship and
 workes for the people to walke in, as are truly
 sweet and amiable in Gods sight, springing from
 fresh and green sincerity, growing up to the
 heavens; these are like galleries of firre, whereas
 vowes of perfection, and works of supererogation,
 and all other reliques and rags of Popery, are
 no better then rotten and moth-eaten wood,
 fit fuell for the fire.

THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 2.

I *Am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.
2 As the lilly among thornes, so is my love
among the daughters.*

*3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among the sonnes; I sate downe un-
der his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was
sweet to my taste.*

*4 He brought me to the banquetting house, and
his banner over me was love.*

*5 Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples,
for I am sicke of love.*

*6 His left hand is under my head, and his right
hand doth embrace me.*

*7 I charge you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem, by
the*

the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that ye stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.

8 The voyce of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountaines, skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a Roe, or young Hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himselfe through the lattice.

10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up my love, my faire one, and come away.

11 For loe, the winter is past, the raine is over and gone.

12. The flowers appeare on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.

13 The figtree putteth forth her greene figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise my love, my faire one, and come away.

14 O my dove! thou art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires, let me see thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is comely.

15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoile the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lillies.

17 Untill the day breake, and the shadows flee away: turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart, upon the mountaines of Bether.

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant.2.verse 1. *I am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.*

THe estate of the Church from *Josiah's* repaire of the Temple, (in the last verse of the last chapter) is described here,

First, before the captivity, verse 1, 2. under the last dayes of *Josiah*, *Jehoahaz*, *Jehojakim*, *Jehojachin*, and *Zedechiab*.

2 Kin. 23.
30, 34. and
24. 6, 17.

Secondly, in the captivity,

1. At home, the remnant, ver. 3.

2. Abroad, in Babylon, ver. 4.—7.

Thirdly, in the end, after the captivity, where is described,

1. Her calling out of captivity, to returne and worship in Jerusalem, verse 8.—13.

Secondly, her estate at Jerusalem till the dayes of the Maccabees, verse 14.

—17.

I am the rose.] The rose is,

First, lovely for beauty,

Secondly, sweet for smell; comforting both heart and braine.

Thirdly, wholesome for use and medicinal.

of

of Sharon.] Sharon was a fruitfull field lying under Bashan, where the heards were wont to feed, excellent for fatnesse and fruitfulness.

And the lilly.] The lilly is, first, fragrant.

Secondly, faire, yet of the vallies, where the heards use to feed, as in Sharon.

These words then set forth the Churches complaint of that time, as some Interpreters of chiefe worth have conceived it; though the words may as fitly be uttered by Christ himselfe, to set forth both his owne disposition and the Churches estate.

The first, hee was then the rose of the field, the lilly of the vallies, to shew, that when the Church despised him, to converse with her in the Temple, and the Worship there celebrated:

* Hee was now ready to leave his Temple, and to be a Sanctuary to his Church abroad.

Secondly, Christ is here described according to the estate of the Church of that time, which wanted culture, ordering and dressing, thornes and bryars growing up in the Church, and not weeded.

1 Chro. 5.
16, 17. &
27, 29.
Isa. 33. 9.
& 35. 2.

Math. 6.
28, 29.
1 Chro. 27
29.

* Chap. 1.
ver. 16, 17.
Ezek. 9. 3.
& 10. 4, 9.
& 11. 23.
16.

* 2 Sam.

23. 6.

† Mic. 7.4.

ded out : * The wicked are as thornes and bryars, † and store of them growing up in the Church.

a Cant. 4.

137

b Mat. 6.

28, 29.

Verse 2, 3.

When the Church is as a garden inclosed ^a, then bryars and thornes are weeded out ; but neither Magistrate nor Minister did his duty in removing offences in those dayes : ^b so lillies of the field are taken for lillies neglected, which neither take care for themselves , nor others take care for them.

Thirdly, as the rose of the field, or lillies of the vallies , or lilly amongst the thornes, is continually,

First, subject to be prickt and rent with thornes.

Secondly, trodden under-foot by the heards of beasts, so the Church was then subject,

1. To be vexed with the wicked growing up with her.

2. To be trodden under-foot by the beasts of the field , the Babylonians, the Egyptians.

c 2 Chro.

35. 22, 23,

24.

2 Chro. 36.

17.

^c *Josiah* , how sweet a Roe ! how faire a Lilly ! yet how untimely trodden down by *Necho* ? The other Kings were placed, displaced, imprisoned, and the whole kingdome

kingdome with them, at the pleasure of the Babylonians and Egyptians: and in the end, the whole Church laid waste by the Babylonians.

Againe, Christ is the rose and lilly, as being,

First, sweet with the savour of his graces.

Secondly, beautifull.

Thirdly, medicinable.

When the Church is corrupt in it selfe, it is yet faire and sweet in Christ, & In him our life is hid in our worst taking: he being white as a lilly by the purity of his righteousnesse, we likewise are white as lillies in him cloathed with his righteousnesse.

d Col 3.3

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes, I sate mee downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.]

Verse 3.

A tree first, not tall as the Cedar of Lebanon, not strong as the Okes of Bashan, but a tree of middle stature, implying an inferiour Magistrate, not so high and mighty as the Monarchs of the world, yet such whose shadow yeelds,

First, refreshing to a man wandering

and fainting in a wilde forrest.

* 2 King.
25.22.

Secondly, whose fruit is sweet and comfortable, such was Christ to his Church, dispensing himselfe in *Gedaliah*, whom * *Nebuchadnezzar* made governour over the remnant of the people that were left in the land.

e 2 Kin. 25.
23.—25.

First, under him, as under a shadow, they were fearelesse and safe: but after he was cut down, they were driven from under his shadow, and durst stay no longer in their own countrey, which was left as a wilde forrest.

f Verse 26

* Jer. 40.
10.—12.

g Jer. 40.6
& 43.6.

Verse 4.

† Ecclef.
7.2.

Secondly, they gathered,
First, much sweet summer fruit*.
Secondly, much good instruction and direction from *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* g, who both lived with him.

Wine-cellar.] *Heb.* House of wine; not so fitly termed banquetting house, which *Solomon* expresseth by another name †. A wine-cellar is a low vault, under the ground, darke, cold, raw and gloomy; yet replenished with vessels of liquor, which refresheth and enlargeth the heart, and openeth the mouth.

This house, to the Church, was Babylon, whither God brought his people
into

into captivity, which at first view seemed dolefull and heavy, but afterward yeelded to them many sweet tastes, yea deep draughts of Gods favour: Gods Spirit coming upon men, makes them seeme as full of new wine ^b. It refresheth and enlargeth the heart, and openeth the mouth,

^b Acts 2.
13.

First, to the praise of God.

Secondly, to the edification of his Church. Such a spirit God powred upon *Daniel, Ezekiel, Shadrach* and his fellowes ⁱ in the captivity.

ⁱ Dan. 1.
19, 20.

And his banner over me was love.]

Banner,

First, for an ensigne of defence to the Church.

Secondly, for a flagge of defiance to their enemies: How lovingly and gloriously (as with a banner of love displayed) did God defend the three children and *Daniel* himself ^k?

Dan. 3. 25.
^k Dan. 6.
22.

How did God offer defiance to Idolatry in the three children ^l?

^l Dan. 5.
16. — 18.
& 6. 10.
Verse 5.

Stay mee with flaggons and comfort mee with apples, for I am sicke of love.] I, the Church is here faint and sicke, and ready to swoone, for desire of further fellow-

ship

ship with Christ, and for her owne help desireth,

First, Flaggons of wine to stay her.

*Fernelius
= Physi-
an.

† Dan. 8.
27. & 10,
12. ver. 15.
19.

Secondly, Apples to comfort her; as indeed apples doe comfort the heart and stomach, prevents swooning, and restraines poyson*: Thus *Daniel*, through abundance of Revelations was faint and sicke, and desirous of more cleere knowledge of his visions, and of the Churches deliverance, and found the † Angel ready to refresh and strengthen him: And the other members of the Church feeling such sweet taste of Christs presence amongst them in the captivity, were (doubtlesse) earnestly desirous of more full enjoying him perfectly,

First, by the ministry of the Prophets, as by flaggons of wine.

Dan. 2.
48, 49

Secondly, by the magistracy of *Daniel* and his fellowes, whom the King set up for inferiour Magistrates, as by apples, the fruit of the apple trees.

Verse 6.

His left hand is under my head, his right hand doth embrace me.

The words may be either a narration how it is, or a prayer that it may be; so in the originall, the blessings of Gods
left

left hand are riches and glory, * and of his right hand, length of dayes, or immortality. Riches and honours God conveyeth to us by the hand of the Magistrate, immortality by the hand of Ministers.

* Pro 3.16

The Church therefore desireth God in her captivity, (which thing also God granted) that,

First, Princes should be the lifters up of her head, her nursing fathers and mothers.

Secondly, Prophets and Priests might deliver to her the sweet testimonies of Christs embracing love; this was done † by *Evil-merodach* to *Jehojachin*, and by the ministry of *Daniel* and *Ezekiel*.

† 2 King.
25.27, 30.
Dan. 2.48,
49.
* Jer. 29.
5, 6.

The Princes allowed them great liberty, * the Prophets dispensed heavenly and comfortable doctrine.

I charge you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.] Heb. I adjure you, that is, I cause you to sweare by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, not by them as the persons thou art to sweare by, but by those for whose sake, and by whose meanes they are to take themselves bound as by a solemne oath (not to stirre

Verse 7.

up or awake my love) that is, not to provoke Christ to exercise his Church by any change of their estate, till it shall please himselfe.

These Roes and Hindes are wilde, and fearfull creatures, easily and swiftly running away, yet otherwise willing to feed with the sheep: such were then the Gentiles, willing to converse with the Jewes, and to come towards Religion: yet if the estate of the Church should have proved more troublesome by any indiscreet or offensive carriage of the Jewes, they would soone have started backe from fellowship with them; for their sakes therefore the Church chargeth her daughters, as by an oath, not to disturb the peace of Babel, not to seeke preposterously deliverance from thence, before the time that Christ had appointed, lest it turned to the disturbance of her peace; and to the * carrying away such Gentiles as were coming on to be Profelytes.

* Jer. 29.
4—9.

use 1.

This may first let us see, that notwithstanding the reformation of Religion, Christ may be pleased rather to live abroad in the fields, then at home, where
the

the people would willingly assemble. The house of God was now repaired, and the bed greene*: and the Church invites Christ to come in unto her, in it, yet hee disposeth himselfe so, as more willing to call her abroad. So wee may see, that notwithstanding the purity and simplicity of Christs worship, yet Christ is not bound to any place; if things were never so reformed, yet he might leave us, and goe into the wilde field. Rome hath long doted on *Peters Chaire*, and Jerusalem might as well have bragged of her Priviledges as any other place, but Christ leaves them: never rest wee then in any outward estate, for Christ may leave us. The Palatinate hath been as reformed as any Church for Doctrine, and though they might say, their bed was greene, and their beames were of cedar, and their rafters of firre, yet God hath left them: for doe we thinke that if God had beene there, these things had befallen them that now are?

* Cant. 8.
16, 17.

Secondly, this lets us see, that though Magistrates and Ministers should both neglect their duties in ordering and dressing the Church, so that the wicked were tolera-

Use 2.

tolera-

tolerated to grow up with them :
 God keeps the spirits of his chil-
 sweet and pure , as roses and lillie
 the midst of bryars and thornes : be
 deceived then , for there may be
 and lillies growing , where is not
 but bryars and thornes to scratch th
 It is not straight no Church , when
 there ; for Christ can see his Chu
 though she be there.

use 3.

Thirdly, we may here observe ag-
 the Separatist , that it is not straight
 Church , that is commingled (as
 speake) with notorious wicked ones
 Church may be Christs love, yea,
 a fragrant and pure flower in his
 and nostrils, and yet live amongst br
 and thornes.

use 4

Fourthly, observe, the state of
 Church is sometimes exposed to op-
 tunity of treading under-foot , no
 nor hedge to fence them : It may
 open,

First , to scratching and rending
 thornes.

Secondly, to treading under-foot of
 wild beasts *.

Fifthly , this serves to direct infer

* Psal. 80.

12, 13.
use 5.

Magistrates, how to carry themselves towards the Church, to be as Apple-trees in a wood, wherein the Church travelling may finde,

First, shadow of protection.

Secondly, sweete fruit of loving mercy.

Sixthly, we may here see the wonderfull power of God, and goodnesse to his Church, in turning their house of bondage into a house of wine, in spreading also his banner of love over them in their greatest distresses and dangers: What more dolefull times of his Church then captivity? when men would thinke God carries his Church into a dungeon, then he carries her into a Wine-cellar. This may be a ground of solid comfort to us in our worst takings, for though wee be in the greatest extremity, yea, in the deepest dungeon of darknesse, God can sustaine and uphold us here, and refresh us with many comforts.

use 6.

Seventhly, this ought to stirre us up to more ardent and longing affections after Christ, so that as wee be ready to faint and swoone through earnest affections, after more full and familiar fel-

use 7.

lowship

Esay 49.
23.
use 8.

lowship with him : It was *Daniels* case, hee was sicke of love, so let it be with us for want of Gods presence; and pray that God would refresh us with his presence, and send good Ministers and good Magistrates to be as nursing fathers to his Church.

Eighthly, this serves to teach, and straightly to charge the children of God, when they enjoy Gods presence and favour in the Ministry and Magistracy, sustaining and comforting them, to take heed of disturbing their peace,

1. By any indiscreet : or

2. Offensive carriage : for it is,

First, a disturbance to Christ himselfe, he is stirred up and awaked, (as it were) before he please.

Secondly, the Roes and Hindes of the field, young comers on in Religion, are soone scared away by dangers and troubles arising against the Church; therefore we should be carefull and take heed wee provoke not any dog to barke, for then they will be gone. Let us therefore walke wisely, and inoffensively, that none bee discouraged, that Christ, who doth sustaine us, and refresh us, may

may dwell with us for ever.

The voice of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountaines, and skipping upon the hills.]

Ver. 8. & 10
the end.

In these words are described,

First, the Churches deliverance out of captivity : where is laid downe,

First, the preparation to the deliverance in the causes of it, which were,

First, the voyce of the beloved.

Secondly, the coming of the beloved, and that swiftly,

First, leaping and skipping.

Secondly, as a young Hart or Roe *.

* Ver. 8, 9.

Thirdly, his besieging Babel and overcoming it, set forth in three actions :

First, standing behinde the wall.

Secondly, looking out at the windows.

Thirdly, shewing himself through the lattice †.

† Ver. 8, 9.

Secondly, the calling out of captivity :

First, to goe out of Babylon into their owne countrey ; whereunto there are motives,

Ver. 10, —
13.

First, from removall of impediments, verse 11.

Secondly, from store of opportunities, verse 12, 13.

E

Thirdly,

h Ver. 14.

Thirdly, to worship God in public meetings in their owne countrey ^h.

Secondly, the state of the Church returned into their owne countrey, in regard,

i Ver. 15.

First, of opposition of enemies; subtil and ravenous: where is set forth,

First, their nature; they are foxes, little foxes.

Secondly, the harme they doe, they spoile the vines.

Thirdly, there take us the foxes.

Secondly, of their communion with Christs outward enemies, and inward abuses restrained, partly, more plentiful and intire.

First, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

k Ver. 16.

Secondly, *k Feedeth amongst the Lillies.*

Secondly, interrupted, and yet by turnes Christ often and speedily visiting and succouring them, and that to the time of the coming of Christ, and the abolishing of the shadowes of the ceremonial Law ^l.

l Ver. 17.

Verse 8.

The voyce of my beloved.] This was the report of Cyrus coming to besiege Babel,

Babel, and his mustering together of many Nations to that service; which rumour was discerned by the faithfull, to be the accomplishment of the Prophecies given them before, of deliverance by *Cyrus* *. And therefore the Church hearing this rumour, suddenly acknowledgeth in it the promise and voyce of Christ †: and so it was no lesse gratefull to them, then dolefull and dreadfull to the Babylonians.

* Isa. 44.
28. & 45. 1

† Jer. 50.
42, 43, 46.

He cometh leaping upon the mountaines.

My beloved is like a Roe, or a young Hart, behold, he standeth behinde our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himselfe through the lattice.]

Verse 9.

These words expresse the great expedition and speed which *Cyrus* made in his journey against Babel, all the Nations lying in the way,

First, either of themselves setting open their gates to him, as weary of the Babylonian yoke.

Secondly, or speedily surpris'd and subdued.

Hee standeth behinde the wall.] Laying siege to the walls of Babylon.

Hee looketh forth at the windowes.] That

† Psa. 137.
3, 4.

should now sing and praise Go their owne countries ; which thought unseasonable to doe in a strange land †.

Verse 13.

The voyce of the turtle is heard in land.] That is, of Christ the faithfull spouse of his Church, who is mourning in Judea, because he findeth not his (the Church) there.

The figtree putteth forth her Greene and the vines with the tender grape give good smell.] That is, the chiefe of Fathers and Elders of the people, shew themselves forward to conduct the journey, and to prepare it.

* Ver. 10,
13.

Arise my love, my faire one, and away.] Being twice repeated*, it signifieth the people were slacke to their states, which they had placed themselves in at Babel ; and therefore stood in need of calling on againe againe.

Verse 14.

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires, let me see thy countenance, let mee heare thy voice for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance comely.

O my dove.] That is, my chaste, innocent and faire spouse.

That art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires.] That now dost worship me in holes and corners.

Let mee see thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce.] Let mee see thee assembled into the face of a Church, in my Sanctuary, let mee there heare thee calling upon mee, singing praise to mee, speaking my word.

For sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance comely.]

First, the voyce of the Church, at one and the same time.

First, rejoycing in Gods wonderfull mercy.

Secondly, weeping and bewailing, partly,

First, their owne unworthinesse.

Secondly, the decayes of the Church, in regard of former times^a.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoile the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.] That is, restraints (the foxes, the little foxes) the enemies of the Church, of greater or lesser power; ^b such as were the Samaritans. These spoiled the

E 4

vines,

a Psa. 14. 6
1, — 3.
with Jer.
50. 4, 5. &
Ezra 3.
11. — 13.
Verse 15.
b Ezra 4.
2. — 4.
& 5. 3.
Neh. 4.
1. — 3.
Hest. 3. 8, 9

c Ezr. 4. 4.
5, 23, 24.

d Neh. 4. 3

e Ezra 6.
11, 13.

f Heb. 7.
10. & 9.
14, 16.
Verse 16.

* Neh. 8.

g Ezr. 10.

† Neh. 13.

Verse 17.

vines, c hindered the proceeding of the building of the Temple, and the peace of the Church. And therefore *Tobiah* said truly of himselfe and his fellowes, that they, as foxes, going upon the weake foundation of the walls of Jerusalem, might easily demolish the same d: Yet these foxes in the end were taken and restrained, First, partly by the Edi&t of *Darius* e: Secondly, partly by the hanging of *Haman* and his sonnes, and the destruction of some other of the Jewes enemies f.

My beloved is mine and I am his.] The Church enjoyeth familiar and comfortable communion with Christ, these enemies being quelled *.

Shee feedeth among the lillies.] That is, among pure and faire Christians, all corruptions being weeded out, both of strange wives g, of usury, of right of the Levites maintenance and ministration, † and prophanation of the Sabbath.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away: turne my beloved, and be thou like a Roe or a young Hart, upon the mountaines of Bethel.

Chap. 2. *Ch. works in instruments of deliverance.*

Turne my beloved.] That is, returne often to visit and succour me.

As a Roe, or a young Hart upon the mountaines of Bether.] That is, swiftly and speedily, * Bether being neere to them on the other side Jordan; as who should say, Though thou sometime turne from us, yet be not farre, but ready ever and anon to returne and succour us.

* 2 S.
29.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away.] That is, till Christ come, and the Ceremoniall shadowes vanish.

First, this teacheth us that in all the instruments of the Churches deliverance, we should see and discern Christ speaking and working in them: See here the Church looks not at *Cyrus* so much, but at Christ in him. Doe they heare a rumour of a deliverance? It is the voyce of Christ, and it must needs be a strong voyce which Christ is the author of. The wisest *Daniel*, *Shadrach*, *Mesbach* and *Abednego*, they say it is Christ, and all the rest yeeld; and the Church sees Christ come skipping: Doth it see *Cyrus* about the wals? She sees Christ there. Doth she see *Cyrus* shewing himselfe through the lattice? She sees Christ there. Doth she

use 1.

see

Verse 13.

see when he is possessed there, and m
proclamation to them to goe up ag
to Jerusalem? She lookes at it as Ch
voyce, saying, *Arise my love, my fair
and come away.*

So the holy Ghost teacheth, wha
your any doth shew to the Church,
Christ that doth it; so take it, that if
good befall the Church, it is Christ
doth it: If any lead into captivity, *N
chadnezzar*, or any other, it is Christ
leads her into a Wine-cellar: If ther
any noise or worke of deliverance,
Christ that comes leaping and skipp
So in all the calamities, and in all
blessings that befall the Church, asc
all to Christ. * The same hand that g
the same hand hath taken away: †
turned the captivity of *Job*, and
turned againe the captivity of his peo
This is a wonderfull stay to G
Church, and to every member of it;
man cannot bring it into captivity,
bring it out againe. Mans hand can
bring hard things upon the Church,
bring her out againe of them; for i
were in mens hands, or in Satans, o
our owne hands, it would not goe v

*Job 1.21

& 42.10.

† Psal. 12.

6, 11.

with us; but being in Christs hands alone, it may be a stay and a comfort.

Secondly, this teacheth us, that when the time of the Churches deliverance is come, Christ will come quickly and speedily for her deliverance, leaping and skipping as a Roe or a Hart. The winter shall not alwayes remain on the Church, no, not when she deserves a black winter. *The patient abiding of the Saints shall not alwayes be forgotten.* Suppose God leads his Church into captivity seven yeares, yea seventy years, yet it will not alwaies continue. This may serve to comfort us in the distresses of the Church, at home or abroad; God will not alwayes punish with reproach or desolation, but the time will come these will be gone and flee away.

Thirdly, this lets us see the Church profiteth by calamities; shee comes out better from them, then shee went into them: she entered and went into captivity hating God, defiled with many abominations; she returns out, *My love, my faire one.* The Church of God, and the members of it are more lovely in Gods sight by the hard times that passe over them.

use 2.

Psal. 9. 18.

use 3.

Jer. 12. 7, 8

* Pro. 3.
11.† Ps. 119.
71.

Ufe 4.

them : when this Church had beene seventy yeares in captivity, (a hard time it was, yet) they lost nothing by it; they kissed his rod, and sought God; and now hee stiles them lovely. He loathed them because they loathed him; they were now tried and purified; before they were loathsome, but now are lovely, before hated, but now loved. But see what a blessed use chastisements are of to the Church: how loathsome soever wee goe into captivity, when wee defile our selves with lusts and sins, yet when wee have beene thoroughly humbled with some crosses, how faire come we out!

** My sonne despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction. And why doth God say, Deut. 8. 16. He proved them to doe them good; when hee saith, my love, it is more then lovely, it is love, it is love it selfe, and faire one is more then faire? So, † It is good for mee (saith David) that I have been afflicted: so the Church before her affliction was loathsome, foule, hated; but now she is faire and lovely.*

Thou art faire, Oh my love.]

Fourthly, this lets us see, the Churches

ches winter: storms shall not alwayes lie upon her, but they shall in the end blow over; * *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.*

* Pl. 125.

3.

use 5.

Fifthly, we may see that outward comforts are easily able to drowne in us a longing after Gods ordinances: the contentment that some found in captivity, made them stand in need of often calling to returne to Sion.

Sixthly, wee may learne here, that the face of the Church is not alwayes visible and conspicuous in the eyes of men, but alwayes in the eyes of God: for they meet under the staires, and worship God in holes and corners. And a while after Christ saith, Why dost thou lie thus under the staires; and in clifts of rocks? let me see thy face, and heare thy voyce. The Church of Rome advanceth her selfe, that she hath alwayes been conspicuous; but this is no true signe of a true Church, for the true Church is not alwayes conspicuous: though Christ alwayes sees some to meet in corners and holes, yet not alwayes in solemne assemblies. The Dove of Christ Jesus sometimes makes her rest in the rockes, and

use 6.

builds

builds under the stairs, where Christ her, but not publicly.

Use 7.

Verse 14.

* Joh. 16.
26, 27.

Seventhly, see here the Church not Angels and Saints to mediate her, her owne voyce is sweet, and tenance comely in Gods estimation *that day yee shall aske in my name; and not to you that I will pray the Father for the Father himselfe loveth you because hee loved mee.* Christ tells us, he have no great need to pray for us God himselfe loveth us, to hear voyce, and to see us; let us then be afraid to put forth our voyces: Let then for such a spirit as to grieve for sinnes, and to rejoyce in Gods mercy for God is pleased with that: hee true citizen of Sion, that when he bounds in Gods mercies, yet hee weeps for his sins; and when hee weeps for sinnes, yet hee is thankfull for mercies.

Use 8.

Verse 16.

Again, observe, the Church alwayes be troubled with some ene *Take us the foxes that spoile the vine.* There shall be ever some *Sanballat* *Tobiah*, or some other to be nibbling the Church of God: wonder not at

ill be so ; but observe touching
nies of the Church,
ney shall deale subtilly and craf-
her.

lly, they may disturb and hinder
and proceedings ; but,
y, they shall in the end be re-
as in *Revel. 19.20. And the Beast*
, and with him the false Prophet
ht miracles before him, &c. These
cast alive into a lake of fire bur-
brimstone. Therefore let such
ow the time will come when
ill either take them, and chaine
nd binde them up, as he did *San-*
*biab, Shether-boznai** : or else
m up, as hee did *Haman* and his
Let men then take heed that they
ush at the Church, for God will
aine them up, or hang them out
ray.

7, here wee may see, when the
of the Church are restrained or
d, and corruptions weeded out
ne Church then enjoyeth sweet,
, and full fellowship with the
fus, and hee with her. Hee gives
ges of his favour, and shee gives
him

* Ezra 6.
6,7.

use 9.

him pledges of pure worshipping him: he feeds them with his ordinances, they him with their sacrifices. And they that would procure Christ this, let them provide for weeding out of their sinnes; as, usury, wicked marriages, profanations of Gods Sabbaths, &c. Such Churches shall be sweet, and much sweet solace shall they enjoy one with another, Christ with them, and they with him.



THE





THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 3.

B*Y night on my bed I sought him whom my soule loveth ; I sought him, but I found him not.*

2 I will rise now, and goe about the city in the streets, and in the broad wayes, I will seeke him whom my soule loveth : I sought him, but I found him not.

3 The watch-men that goe about the city found mee, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soule loveth ?

4 It was but a little that I passed from them but I found him whom my soule loveth : I held him, and would not let him goe, untill I had brought him into my mothers house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.

6 Who is this that cometh out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrb, and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant?

7 Behold his bed, which is Solomons: threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

8 They all hold swords, being expert in warre: Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of feare in the night.

9 King Solomon made himselfe a charet of the wood of Lebanon.

10 Hee made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottome thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the middest thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

11 Goe forth, O ye daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon with the crowne wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals: and in the day of the gladnesse of his heart.

Tm



THE EXPLANATION.

Cant. 3. verse 1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soule loveth, I sought him, but I found him not, &c.*

THis Chapter setteth forth the estate of the Church from after the dayes of *Nehemiah*, to the time of Christs sojourning here on earth, in a two-fold period:

First, under the *Maccabees*, ver. 1.—6.

Secondly, in *Fohn Baptists* time, verse 6.—11.

The state of the Church in the *Maccabees* time was, partly, full of calamities, as a time of darknesse, *By night I sought him*, and partly sweetned with some more comfortable issue.

This calamity is set forth,

First, by resemblance to night, *By night I sought him.*

Secondly, by the absence of Christ, whom she sought in vaine.

First, *In her bed*, verse 1.

Secondly, *In the streets of the city*, verse 2.

Thirdly, *Amongst the watchmen*, ver. 3.

Verse 1.

Verse 2.

The comfortable issue of her seeking Christ is set forth,

First, *By her finding of him*, verse 4.

Secondly, *By her holding of him*, verse 4.

Thirdly, *By her bringing of him into her mothers house*, verse 4.

Fourthly, *By her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem*, to walke circumspectly, that this estate be not interrupted, ver. 5.

Ver. e 1.

By night.] That is, in time of darknesse, and publicke calamity; when *Antiochus Epiphanes*, the little horne waxed exceeding great, wasted the pleasant land, cast some of the host and starres of heaven to the ground; when hee tooke away the daily sacrifice, and trode downe the Sanctuary, and cast downe the truth to the ground; when hee robbed the Temple, murdered the people, spoiled the City, made lawes for profaning the Sabbath, for offering Swines flesh, for neglecting Circumcision, when he set up the Statues of *Jupiter Olympius*, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, when hee burnt the Bookes of the Law, and made it death to have a Testament; when he brake downe the Altar and set up another, when hee put women to

Dan. 8.
9.—12.

death

death who had caused children to be circumcised, and hanged children upon the neckes of their mothers, 1 Mac. 1. 23. to the end.

In my bed.] Not in my bed of ease and sloth, (as some take it) for what ease could the Church take in the night time of calamity? But in my bed, that is, in the place and duties of Gods worship, the temple and the ordinances.

Cha. 1. 16.
& 3. 7.

I sought him whom my soule loveth.] I desired and endeavoured to have fellowship with Christ, but I found him not, the Sanctuary being polluted, and the daily sacrifice taken away, and profane Idols set up in the place.

In the streets of the city.] That is, in the open Assemblies of the faithfull, in the Synagogues, in the cities of Judea and Jerusalem; but behold there Altars erected to Idols, and incense burned, and the books of the Law cast into the fire*: Yea, behold, the citizens of Jerusalem all fled and gone†: and the rest went in procession to Bacchus*.

Verse 2.

* 1 Mac. 1.

57.—59.

† 1 Mac. 1.

40.

* 2 Mac.

6. 7.

Verse 3.

The watch-men that goe about the city.] To wit, the Levites, who answered her with silence; but a little after shee found

* 1 Mac.
2.42, 43.
† 1 Mac.
3.5.—8.

m 1 Mac.
4.42, 46.

succour at Modin, for the Priests, *Mattathias* and his sonnes, *Judas*, *Jonathan*, and *Simon*, and the rest that went about to reparaire the ruines of the Church and Common-wealth; to these the faithfull Church repairing, * and finding deliverance and comfort, by *Judas* especially, or rather by Christ in him †, shee left him not till shee had brought him into the Temple, where shee soone after cleansed the Sanctuary, and restored the purity of Gods worship, and offered sacrifice according to the Law, so that shee found great comfort and joy in the duties of Gods worship^m. Thus againe found they Christ in a typicall Saviour, held him by faith, and, with courage and zeale, brought him into the temple and Sanctuary, the house and chamber of her mother: that is, of the former Church of Israel, or of the Catholique Church, for the Church of the former ages is the mother of the latter; or the whole Church is the mother of each part in usuall phrase of Hebrew speech: The Temple is the house of both, the Sanctuary is the chamber of her that bare her.

I charge you, O yee daughters of Ferusalem, by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.

Verse 5.

I charge you, &c.] See the same words opened, [Chap. 2. 7. The Church chargeth all her daughters, all her members, to take heed, lest by their undiscreeet dealing, or any wicked practise, they stirre up the neighbour Princes of Syria and Egypt; not to disturb the peace of the Church, and to provoke Christ againe to leave them desolate; which though *Jason* and *Menelaus* and *Alcimus* broke †, yet they prevailed not so far, but Christ was still found in the temple of the faithfull till his coming in the flesh.

† 2 Mac.
14:14.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Verse 6.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness.] This is a description of *John Baptist*, and of the Church gathered by his Ministry in the wilderness: which is set forth,

First, by the admiration and inquisitiveness of the old Synagogue after him

1 Joh. 1. 19.
Luk. 3. 15

and his baptisme : Who is this that cometh, or ariseth, &c. which was fulfilled^l : to whom the Jewes sent Priests and Levites to aske him, Who art thou ? and all men mused whether hee were not the Christ.

m Lukc 3.

2.—4.

Mar. 1. 3, 4.

Secondly, by the place of his arising, and the Church with him, in the wilderness^m.

Thirdly, by the manner of arising, like pillars of smoake, which,

First, ariseth from fire, as the Church arose from zeale and fervency of *Johns* Ministry.

n Mat. 3.

5, 6.

Secondly, ascendeth on high, as the propagation of this Church did, even to Jerusalemⁿ.

o Mat. 3.

5, 6.

Thirdly, fills the countrey, as the Church did with rumour and increase of it^o.

p Chap. 1.

13.

Fourthly, by the excellent fragrancy and sweetnesse of the graces thereof perfumed^p, preserving from putrefaction : such was the powerfull zeale of *John* and his Ministry, strongly fragrant as Myrrh, and preserving his hearers from Pharisaicall hypocrisie: Frankincense is of like strong fragrancy, and of chiefe use

Mat. 3. 7,

—10.

in

in making of the holy Incense ^q; by which prayer was signified ^r, to intimate the fragrancy and fervency of his prayers, who taught all his disciples to pray ^s.

With all powders of the merchant.] To wit, perfumed with the sweet graces of God, & filled with the holy Ghost above all Prophets, yea, above all that were borne of women ^u; whence also hee seasoned all sorts of his hearers with graces and directions fit for their severall callings ^x.

Fifthly, by the doctrine of *John*, who expressly preached the Lord Jesus manifested in the flesh.

Behold his bed which is Solomons, three-score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.]

Behold his bed which is Solomons.] This Doctrine the Church of that time received and beleaved: In which Doctrine, that first Church first discerned and beleaved,

First, the Temple of Christs body; for the bed ^y was taken, as also it is here, for the Temple, which was the type of Christs body ^z.

Now, this as *John* pointed ^a, *Behold the*

Lamb

q Exod.30
34.

r Pla.141.

2.

s Luke 11.

1.

t Luke 1.

15.

u Mat.23.

9,11.

x Luke 3.

10.—14.

Verse 7.

y Chap. 1.

16.& 3. 1.

z John 2.

19,20.

a John 1.

29,30.

Col. 2. 9.

Joh. 1. 51.

Mat. 2. 13,

19.

i Luke 1.

35.

Hos. 1.

k Psal. 16.

10.

Lamb of God, as here it is said, *Behold, bed.* This Temple it is the Temple *Solomon*, of Christ; in him the God dwelleth bodily.

Secondly, the guard of Angels attending it, to prevent the feare of *Herod* mity and others.

Thirdly, the maker of his human verſe 9. King *Solomon* made himself Couch, the word may bee translated Goach or Couch: this latter I take, partly for the Etymologie of *Aph* *ſel.* 38. to be fruitfull as the brides be and partly for agreement with the former word bed, ver. 7.

No earthly father, but Christ by owne Spirit made his own body, and own bed in his mothers womb.

Fourthly, the matter of it, the wood *Lebanon*, for the Virgin *Mary* dwelt at *Nazareth* of *Galilee* at the foot of *Lebanon*.

As *Solomons* Temple, the type of Christs body, was made of the wood *Lebanon*, the cedar which is free from corruption; so was the body of Christ found from seeing corruption.

Fifthly, the ornaments of it, which were,

First, partly his offices :

1. Priestly , as pillars of silver abiding the fire of Gods wrath, and pure as silver tried in the fire.

Heb. 7. 26.

2. Propheticall , delivering us a word precious as gold, even as fine gold ¹.

1 Psal. 19.
10.

3. Kingly, whence it is said, verse 10. *The covering of it of purple* , the royall ornament of Kings.

Secondly, partly, the affection wherein he undertooke and executed these offices, love of the daughters of Jerusalem, ver. 10. All these *John* declareth ^m.

Verse 10.

Secondly , hee exhorteth and stirreth up the faithfull to behold,

m John 3.
29. to the
end.

First, Christ ^a.

Secondly, ^a *The ornaments wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals*. The day of his espousals was the day when God the Father contracted him with the Church ^{*} ; whence after hee is called the bridegroom ^p , and *John* the Bridegroomes friend , his Disciples the children of the Bride-chamber : And the Church henceforward in this Booke is called the Spouse , not before. *The crowne wherewith his mother crowned him* , is the testimony of Christs sove-

n John 1.
29.—end.
o Ver. 11.

* Mat. 3. 17
p John 3.
29.

raignty,

q John 1.
33, 34, 35,
49. & 3.
29.—36.
Use 1.

raignty, which *John* and the f
gave him 9.

*First of the estate of the Church in
the Maccabees.*

First, this doth teach us with v
tent wee are to come before God
publicke Assemblies, namely, t
Christ the love of our soules ;
shew our fine garments, want
gaze at beauties ; not to satisfie th
or friends, for fashions sake , but t
Christ instructing us in tempt
Some come to catch something
Christ to entrap him , &c. but i
duty to come unto him , as a Sp
her Husband, for seed ; so we mu
to Christ , that hee may cast the f
grace into our soules , that we ma
forth fruit unto him.

Use 2.

† Cant. 2.
16.

* Verse 1.
2, 3.

* Psal. 119

24, 25. &
30. 6, 7, 8.

Secondly, this lets us see the c
able estate of the Church ; shee i
joyced in the presence and fellow
Christ, and could say, * *My be
mine, and I am his*, now seekes him
where, and with much difficulty a
guish †. And so it is oft with eve
member of the Church, as wee m
it was with *David** : so it is nov

our brethren beyond the seas, whom you might have commended a yeare or two agoe, and have found Christ there; but now he is gone, shee seekes him but findes him not: See the Church of God sometime enjoys all the ordinances of God, sometimes none; so a Christian soule sometimes hath Christs left hand under her head, and his right hand to embrace her, soone after shee findes him not so. Wee must not condemne the Church for this; for they that are tenderly beloved of Christ may sometimes seeke him and not finde him.

Cant.2. 6.

use 3.

Thirdly, this may comfort such as seeke Christ in all his ordinances: they shall either finde him in them; or, after the use of them, in some unexpected or extraordinary help. The Church here that found not Christ in the Temple, nor in the Assemblies and recourse of Christian people, nor in conference with the Priests, found him soone after in an unexpected and extraordinary help, even *Judas Maccabeus*, verse 4. for indeed it was extraordinary for the tribe of *Levi* to take up the Sword and Scepter, which indeed belonged to *Judah*: so you see when

when ordinary meanes faile, God will be found in extraordinary: Whosoever would finde Christ, and seeke him eue where, they shall surely finde him eue in his ordinances, or out of them.

use 4.

Fourthly, this lets us see the affectionate cleaving of such to Christ, as long sought him and not found him at last: such lay hold on him, and not let him goe, *verse 4.* which is Reason why Christ sometimes hid himselfe from us, that wee might find him the more diligently, and, having found him, cleave to him more stedfastly; and this God looks for at the hands of his.

use 5.

Fifthly, this doth exhort Christ's children that live among bad neighbours to be the more circumspectly, as the daughters of Jerusalem are here charged upon to doe, *ver. 5.* being betwene the Syrians and Egyptians. It is a charge given to the Church to her daughters, to take heed that they stirre not up her love, nor against Christ till he please.

Two Reasons are given for it.

First, it may provoke Christ's children to bring another estate upon the Church.

which will not be good for it.

Secondly, in regard of fearefull Christians, for they will start away; many are willing to come into the Church, but if the profession of Christ be troublesome and hot, they will not abide it: herefore this charge is needfull that wee may walke holily, that Christ be not stirred up, nor these fearefull Christians discouraged. See this handled, *Chap. 2. verse 7.*

Thus farre the first part, in the time
of the *Maccabees*: Now,
Secondly, of the estate of the Church
in John Baptist's time.

This is first to shew us, that God can raise up a Church even in the wilderness, to the admiration of observers: and so hee can raise up our neighbour Churches, now brought to a wilderness. This may comfort us in regard of them; for though they be now desolate, yet we may hope a time will come when they shall rise againe.

Use 1.
Verse 6.

Secondly, see here is a part of the duty of ancient Christians, not to maligne the graces of God in those that come after them, but to admire them*, *Who is it*

Use 2.

that

* Verse 6.

*that cometh out of the wildernesse lik
of smoake, perfumed with Myrrh and
kincense, &c.*

Use 3.

Verse 6.

* Luke 3.

10.— 14.

Thirdly, this shewes what graces are most requisite in a Minister, and doe most adorne him, even in his Ministry, and fervency in it, and all sorts of sweet graces to direct all sorts of his people in severall callings, as *John* did *, where people came and said, *What shall we do?* He answered and said, *He that hath water, let him impart to him that hath none.* So *John* was perfumed with graces, as all men: for men must not come in the Ministry with judgement and law alone, for these may come from men, but they must come perfumed with graces, to keep themselves and others from putrefaction; yea, they must labour for those graces which will give a strength to save themselves and others.

Use 4.

Fourthly, this shewes us the Man and Godhead of Christ; Christs human nature is the temple, or bed where Godhead resteth bodily; and the human nature made this temple or bed for himselfe, no earthly father for him.

Verse 7, 9.

Fifthly, see here the protection and gardiance the Angels give to Christ, and in him to the Church and all his members, ver. 7, 8.

Sixthly, wee may here see in Christ whatsoever is behoovefull for all our salvations. In regard of his Priestly office hee is pure as silver, to cleanse our impurity, and to abide the fire: In regard of his Prophetickall office hee is precious as gold, to enrich our poverty: In regard of his Royall and Kingly office, he is glorious as purple, and cloathed with it, to advance our baseness: His heart, or middest, is even paved with love of us: His heart is an hearth (for so the word signifieth) whereon the fire of his love towards us burneth continually; let us then love the Lord Jesus againe, and receive the seeds and fruits of his grace, and then shall wee see his heart flaming with love to us: and then whatsoever befalls, bloodshed, warre, captivity, &c. all comes from love; his whole heart is paved with love.

Seventhly, let us take up our thoughts and meditations about Christ; let us goe forth and behold him; let his

G

abundant

Use 5.
Psal 91.
11, 12.
Psal. 34. 7.
2 King. 6.
16, 17.
Heb. 1. 14.
Rev. 5. 11.
& 7. 11.
Use 6.

Verse 10.

Use 7.

use 8.

abundant graces fill our empty soules.

Eighthly, if thou beest a daughter of Sion, thou art contracted to Christ; and know it by this, Dost thou read his letters? art thou delighted with them? and dost thou rejoyce to speake to him againe by prayer? If thou dost, it may be the joy of thy heart, for thy estate is good.

use 9.

Lastly, this doth exhort us all to give up our selves as spouses to Christ, and that with all gladnesse of heart, since he is affected to us, who yet hath nothing from us but debts and beggery: and they that do give themselves up to Christ, need not fear wanting comfort; for no spouses shall finde such comfort as they. Shall hee be glad to have us, a company of beggers: yea, as I may say, a company of deaths? And was it the gladness of his heart to be espoused to us, which was when his Father contracted him to us, and shall wee think it a day of deading to set our feet into Christs bed? All the merchants cannot set forth our excellency, when hee shall pay all our debts, and adorn us with all his graces; therefore let us go forth, and bring him home to us, wee shall then finde him comfortable to us in the day of espousals.

THE

THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 4.

BEhold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire, thou hast doves eyes within thy lockes: thy haire is as a flock of goats, that appeare from mount Gilead.

2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing: whereof every one beare twins, and none is barren among them.

3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4 Thy neck is like to the tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

5 Thy two breasts are like two young Roes, that are twins, which feed among the lillies.

Secondly, the death of Christ falling out in her time, verse 6.

Behold, thou art faire.] Faire twice repeated implies, by an usuall Hebraisme, that she was very fair: and beloved twice repeated, argues her eminent beauty was very conspicuous; such was the estate of the Church gathered by his Ministry and flocking after him.

First, it was faire and beautifull, partly in her flocking after him ^a.

Secondly, leaving all to follow him, * hanging upon his mouth, and wondring at the gracious words and deeds coming from him.

Secondly, in his both,

First, presence with her, as her light ^b.

Secondly, decking of her by his Ministry.

This beauty of the Church was well knowne, yet ought to have beene better observed:

First of all, by the children of wisdom ^c.

Secondly, of all the ^d Greekes, even strangers ^e of the Pharisees and Elders.

Thou hast doves eyes within thy lookes.]

Doves (as before, Chap. 1. 15.) are noted,

First,

^a Mat. 4.

25.

* Mat. 19.

19, 27.

Luke 19.

48. & 9.

43.

^b Joh. 3. 29

Joh. 12. 35

^c Mat. 11.

19.

^d John 12.

20, 21.

^e John 12.

19.

First, for their chaſtneſſe.

Secondly, loathing of uncleanneſſe, but there is withall in their eyes,

1. Cleanneſſe.

2. Simplicity.

This implies that the Church at that time,

First, ſaw more clearely ſundry truths about Chriſt then the Fathers had done ^f, or the preſent Governours ^g.

Secondly, was of a ſimple and innocent-looke and demeanour ^h.

Thirdly, looked with a chaſte eye, after Chriſt alone ⁱ.

Fourthly, loathed the uncleanneſſe of Pharifaicall ſuperſtitions ^k.

Within thy locks.] For their knowledge, though cleare in many things, yet perceived not ſundry plaine points: as,

First, the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt ^l.

Secondly, the leaven of the Phariſees ^m.

As the eye within lockes of haire is hindred from diſcerning things lying open before it.

Thy haire as a ſlocke of goats that appeare from mount Gilead.]

^f Luke 10.
23, 35.

^g Joh. 9. 39

^h Mat. 23.
16.

ⁱ Joh. 1. 47.
^j Joh. 6. 68

^k Mat. 23.
13.

^l Luke 18.
32, 33, 34

^m Mar. 2.
15.

Luke 12. 1
Mat. 16. 6.

Haire, though it hang long upon the head, yet it may in time either,

First, fall of it selfe.

Secondly, bee cut off: so were the common Christians of that time (as it were) haire,

1. For multitude.

2. Hanging on Christ the Head.

3. Falling many of them from him:

a Joh.6.66

First, either of themselves ^a, or,

b Mat. 27.
20.

John 12.

42, 43.

c John 2.

23.—25.

Secondly, cut off by the practises of the ^b Priests: hence it was that Jesus durst not commit himselfe to them ^c,

As a flocke of goats.] Which are wont,

First, to assemble themselves in companies; so did the people gather after Christ.

d Mat. 9.
36.

Secondly, to be without a shepherd, as this people were ^d.

Thirdly, to feed afarre off, and that somewhat dangerously, upon rocks.

e Mar. 8.3.

f Joh. 9.22

So the people came from farre to hear Christ ^e, and were in danger for feeding on him ^f.

Verse 2.

Thy teeth are like a flocke of sheep that are even [horne, which came up from the washing: whereof every one beare twins, and none is barren among them.]

The

The sheep whereto these teeth are likened, are set forth,

First, by their even-shornnesse.

Secondly, by their cleannesse, coming up from the washing.

Thirdly, by their fruitfulnessse, *Every one bringeth forth twins, none barren.*

First, even set, none gaping out.

Secondly, white and cleane.

Thirdly, each answering to his fellow in the other jaw, none wanting, as it is a praise to the teeth to be. The teeth are such as chew the meat, and prepare it for the rest of the body, such in that Church were the Apostles, whom our Saviour calls a little flock ^g: they were all,

First, even set, and even shorne, none bursting out beyond his fellowes: *Peters* supremacy stretched not beyond the rest of the Apostles ^h.

The teeth of innocent sheep are even set: They that have tusshes longer then the other teeth are hurtfull and ravenous beasts; as Dogs, Beares, Lions, &c. Ten of the Apostles disdained the motion of supremacy.

Secondly, came up from *Johns* Baptisme, and therefore when *Judas* tell a-

way

g Luke 12
32.

h Mat. 16.
19. compared with
Joh. 20. 23
& Mar. 18
18. Mat.
20. 20, 25.
Mark 10.
49, 42.
Luke 12.
24, 25.

A&C. 1.21,
22.

away, they must needs supply him out of the number of such as had continued with them from *Johns* Baptism.

* Luk. 10.
1.

Secondly, they were suitable each to his fellow, and therefore the 12 were sent out by couples*.

† Luk. 10.
17, 18.

But especially they were fruitful bringing home many lambs to Christ; hence the seventy returned with Christ †, and Satan is said to fall from heaven before them like light.

Verse 3.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, speech is comely: thy temples are like of a pomegranate within thy locks.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, speech is comely.] Both signifying the very or utterance of the Doctrine Church at that time, which was,

First, as a thread, slender, (*seni* is plump or swelling with humanquence, but favouring of Fishermunity and simplicity.

Secondly, as a thread of scarlet or purple is a princely and weare, so their Doctrine was,

* Mat. 10.
7.

First, touching the kingdom of heaven. Secondly, though tender, yet dyed in graine with royal Majesty.

authority of the Spirit of God.

Thy temples are like a piece of Pomegranate within thy lockes.] Temples of the head are they by which the whole body watcheth or resteth; they are such therefore as watch over the body, and for it. The Pomegranate was of much use in the old Tabernacle and Temple: * *Aarons* coat was hanged with Pomegranates and Bells; Bells for sound of Doctrine and Prayer, Pomegranates for restraining and healing the distempers and diseases of the people. Pomegranates are commended by *Fernelius* †,

First, for repressing the heat of choler.

2. The malignity, rottenesse, and acrimony of feavers.

3. The loosenesse of the belly.

Secondly, for comforting and strengthening the stomacke and bowels, to the keeping backe all fainting*. This office, the Ecclesiasticall governours of the Church doe performe to it; they repress the heat of fallings out among brethren, the notorious abuses, the loosenesse, or distemperednesse of the people; they comfort the feeble, and binde up the weake, and are therefore fitly resembled

* *Exod.*
28.34.

† *Fernel.*
p.26.

* *Fernel.*
Method.
medend.
lib. 5. ca. 3.

by

by Pomegranates, yea, by a piece of a Pomegranate: for it is not the whole body of the Pomegranate that doth this; but it, broken in pieces, by his juice and rinde is medicinable.

Within thy lockes.] Because though Christ established Discipline, and delivered it to the Church in his time ^k; yet it was not displayed, nor shewed it selfe in open execution till after his Resurrection ^l.

Thy necke is like the tower of David, &c.] The necke is that part that joyneth head and body together; now that which joyneth Christ and his Church together, is our Faith: which Faith in some of the members of that Church in Christs time, was observed to bee strong and great ^{*}; and therefore is here fitly compared to the tower of David, for an *Armory*, (whereof wee read) *† whereon there hangd a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.* It seemes Davids mighty men hangd up their shields in this Armory against times of warre; and so in like manner all the Worthies of Israel, all the faithfull before Christ, hangd their shields of faith upon Christ, in whom

^k Mat. 18.

15.—17

1 Cor. 5.

1.—6.

Verse 4

^{*} Mat. 8.

10. & 15.

28.

† Nch. 9.

25, 26.

whom the faith of his Church was as a strong Armory*. Faith is not so much a tower of strength in it selfe, as in Christ whom it apprehendeth.

* Heb. xi.
13.

Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twinnes, which feed among the lillies.

Verse 5.

Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twinnes.] The breasts give milke: now the breasts that give milke to the Church, the sincere † milke of the word, are the Ministers, which in the Church of Christs time were first the Apostles; secondly, the seventy: and are therefore here called two breasts, and both as Roes, because not tyed to any certaine place within all the people of the Jewes, for Roes stay not long in a place: And both as twins, because of equall commission, being both sent alike to the whole house of Israel, though, after the Resurrection, the Apostles commission was enlarged further then that of the seventy.

† 2 Pet. 2.2

Which feed among the lillies.] For they were sent not onely among the Gentiles or Samaritans, but amongst,

First, the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Mat. 10.

Secondly,

Mat. 23. 2. Secondly, the true-hearted or w
fected of the Heralites.

These faithfull are here, compar
the lillies,

First, for their whitenesse and pu
innocency.

Verse 6.

Secondly, for their amiableness
Untill the day breake, and the shadow
away: I will get mee to the mountai
Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.

Untill the day breake, and the shadow
away.] That is, untill the light of th
spell breake forth, and the shadow
the Mosaicall Ceremonies vanish.

I will get me to the mountaines of I
and to the hill of Frankincense.] That
the Mounts, and to the hill of

First, of Myrrh, where he
Secondly, of Frankincense, offered in
Garden, and on the Crosse, and
to his Crosse all the shadowes o
Law, and in fulfilling them, abol
them.

* Col. 2.

14.

Myrrh and Frankincense, are two
be used in embalming, and with such
Christ himselfe at his death was to
beene embalmed, of his Resurrection
not prevented the women. Besides.

John 19.

39, 40.

Luke 23.

46.

Passion of Christ was a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God, and therefore the place thereof is fitly called the *Mountain of Myrrh, and Hill of Frankincense*; though otherwise the mountain of Myrrh may well be mount Calvary, or Golgotha, the place of his death: and the hill of Frankincense mount Olivet, in regard of his Ascension into Heaven; yea, even Heaven it selfe, whither he ascended, may be well called the hill of Frankincense for sweetnesse.

This first doth teach us that a Church may be beautifull in Gods sight, though consisting,

use 1.

First, of meane persons.

Secondly, of such as were sometimes notorious offenders; as Publicans and Harlots: and from hence,

First, poore people.

Secondly, sinners, yea, ugly sinners are to be exhorted to repentance and seeking after Christ: It makes them truly amiable in Christs eyes; though otherwise in themselves never so meane and foule.

From hence also poore sinners may take comfort; though loaden with the sense of their deformities, they in
Christ

Mat. 23.
23.

Christs eyes are very beautifull.

From hence also the Separatist learne, that notwithstanding manes in their Teachers, or others Church, as the Scribes and Pharisees, whom the people were to heare, y^e Church may be denominated from a better part very faire, as a heathen wheat, though covered over with durance of chaffe.

Secondly, this may teach Ministers how to frame themselves to be as in Gods fight, viz.

First, by carrying themselves with their brethren.

Secondly, by cleansing their hearts by the power of Baptisme.

Thirdly, by fruitfulness, and faithfulness in their Ministry.

Fourthly, by not affecting carnal eloquence, but gracious and deep powerfull utterance; for swelling of humane wisdoms make mens preaching seeme to Christ (as it were) a blindest Ministry.

Fifthly, by restraining abuses and sinnes amongst the people, and strengthening and comforting the feeble mindes.

Six

Sixthly, by feeding their people with
* sincere milke, and not being drie
nurses.

* 1 Pet. 2.
2.

Seventhly, by taking most delight in
conversing among lillies, their well-af-
fected people, though seeking also to
winne all, and therefore sometimes con-
versing with them as the Physicians a-
mong the sicke.

- This may teach Ecclesiasticall Gover-
nours their office in the former vertues of
the Pomegranate, to repress the heat of
abuses, the looseness and distemperdness
of the people, to comfort the feeble, and
binde up the weak, &c.

Use 3.

Verse 3.

Fourthly, this may teach the people
how to approve themselves to Christ, in
looking after Christ in knowledge, sim-
plicity, chastity of spirit, loathing super-
stitions, and places of bad resort.

*Aspicias ut veniunt ad candida testa Co-
lumba.*

Thou seest how Pigeons take their
flight,

To houses that be faire and white.

For, what should Christians doe in
filthy Tavernes, Ale-houses, Stews, &c.
in strength of faith rooting and build-

H

ding

Cant. 4. 7,
— 11.

ding themselves upon Christ.

Thou art all faire my love, there is no spot in thee.] In these words wee have a description of the estate of the Church soon after Christs ascension ; gathered and built up by the Ministry of the Apostles, which they call the Apostolick or primitive Church.

This Church is here set forth,
First, by her compleat beauty, her full fairenesse, *vers. 7.*

Secondly, by Christs calling her to behold the calling of the Gentiles, *ver. 8.*

Thirdly, by the ravishing beauty of a sister Church at that time :

1. In one of her eyes.
2. One chaine of her necke. } *vers. 9.*

Fourthly, by her love, which is set forth,

1. By the fairenesse of it.
2. By the sweetnesse of it above wine. } *vers. 10.*

Fifthly, by the flowingnesse, sweetnesse, and wholsomnesse of her doctrine, *v. 11.*

Sixthly, by the smell of her garments, like that of Lebanon, *ver. 11.*

Thou art faire.] The fairenesse of the Church was acknowledged before, but
never

never till now the perfect fairenesse. All compleat fairenesse or beauty standeth in these three things:

First, in the integrity of all the parts and members of the body; for if any be wanting, it is a maimed, a blemished body.

Secondly, in the Symmetry, or fit proportion of all the members one to another.

Thirdly, in the good complexion, or colour of them all. Look what parts are requisite for the compleat integrity of a faire Church, they are all found in the Apostolick Church in comely proportion of beauty; for look,

First, at their doctrine, and it was,

1. Free from all error, so farre as it was dispensed by the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists of that time *, who likewise suffered no weeds of false doctrine to grow under them *.

* A. 28.

22, 27.

* Rev. 2. 2.

2. Their doctrine was compleat, even the whole counsell of God †.

† A. 20.

27.

3. It was dispensed in powerfull simplicity *.

* 1 Cor. 2.

4.

A. 2. 17,

44. & 4. 4.

Secondly, look at their worship, and you may see,

1. The purity of Gods ordinances,

H 2

without

* 1 Cor.

11. 23, 34.

& 14. 26,

48.

* A&. 4.

31. & 13.

1, — 3. &

14. 23.

* A&. 4.

32.

† A&. 4.

32.

* Gal. 4.

14, 15.

* A&. 14.

23.

1 Cor. 5.

3, — 5.

17th 2 Cor.

2. 6, — 8.

without mixture of humane inventions*.

2. Order, decency, edification of all aimed at in all the duties administred,)

3. Fervency and frequency in prayer* and fasting.

Thirdly, looke at their Christian communion, and you may see,

1. Their unity one with another*.

2. Love, and large-heartednesse one towards another †, especially to their Ministers*.

Fourthly, looke to their Discipline, and you may see the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Presbyters, Pastors, Teachers, first, teaching; secondly, exhorting; thirdly, ruling: and all by, first, preaching; secondly, writing; thirdly, private conference; fourthly, good examples: (No Churches unprovided of Presbyters, in the plurall number*.)

Thirdly, the Deacons providing for the poore, *Act. 6. 3. — 6.*Fourthly, both sorts chosen by the Church, *Act. 6. 3, 5.*

Fifthly, Excommunications dispensed upon weighty occasions, and with great reverence, and with good successe.

Sixthly, Synods imposing no other but

but necessary things, either in themselves, or for the present use of the Church, *Acts 15. 26.*

This comely frame and order of the Church *Paul* beholding, joyed in it *. The Church was now called a Spouse after Christ had taken our nature upon him.

* Col. 2. 5.

Come with me from Lebanon, (my Spouse) with mee from Lebanon : looke from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions dens, from the mountains of the Leopards.

Verse 8.

Come with me from Lebanon.] It is a famous hill in the uttermost border of Israel northward: *Amana* a hill more northward on the west of Syria, looking into Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, & all Asia the less.

Hermon and Shenir.] Two names of the same hill, though happily given to divers parts, called also *Syrion* or *Sien* *.

* Deut. 3. 9. & 4. 48.

The Lions dens and mountaines of the Leopards.] Jerusalem † and the Temple in our Saviours time was made a den of theeves and robbers; but in the Apostles time, after the Ascension, the Rulers grew more fierce and cruell, spilling the blood of *Stephen*, and making havocke of

† Mat. 21.

13.
Mar. 12.17.
Luke 19.
46.

the Church : So then, in this verse, Christ calls his Church of the Christian Jewes,

First, to behold from *Lebanon, Hermon, Amana*, the Church of the Gentiles gathered in *Antioch, Phenice, Cyrene, Cyprus, &c.*

Secondly, to come out from those dens of ravenous persecutors at Jerusalem, and to prepare her selfe to dwell among the Gentiles. Upon the persecution of *Stephen* the faithfull wandred into these parts, and preached the Gospell partly to the Jewes, and after to the Gentiles also *; whereupon great numbers of the Gentiles beleaved †: Which when tydings thereof came to Jerusalem, it was as the voice of Christ calling the Church of Jerusalem to send *Barnabas* to them, to see the Churches there and to establissh them *. Afterwards when the Church of the Gentiles increased in number and grace, and the Jewes increased and grew up in blasphemy and rage against the Gospell, Christ called his Church at Jerusalem to leave those dens and mountaines of Lions and Leopards.

* A&A. 11.
18, —20.
† A&A. 11.
21.

* ver. 22.
—24.

A&A. 22.
21. & 13.
46.
Verse 9.

My sister.] This implieth that Christ

NOW

now speaketh not to the mother Church of the Jewes, but to a sister Church, the Church of the Gentiles; such a sister as is also a spouse, a true Church, now first called a sister by reason of the accession of the Church of the Gentiles.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chaine of thy neck.

Thou hast ravished my heart, thou hast ravished my heart.] This implies that Christ was overcome exceedingly with the love of the Church: for such repetitions imply, in the Hebrew Phrase, a superlative excellency.

This Church so affecting Christ was *Antioch*, the first Church of the Gentiles, seated between *Amana* and *Lebanon*: for *Barnabas*, seeing the grace of God upon them, was not a little glad of it, so that his spirit was stirred up to exhort them to continue and grow up *: yea, hee went out and sought *Saul*, to bring him among them*; and they both spent a whole yeare there, and did winne much people, so that that Church was first called *Christian*, they first had their husbands name, the name of Christ first put

* A& 11.
23, 24.
* ver. 25,
26.

upon them, for the forwardnesse of his love to them, and theirs to him.

With one of thy eyes.] The eyes of the Church are severall, according as the Church may be severally considered: for if the Church be considered as assembled together to publike duties, so the Ministers of the Church are the eyes, amongst whom they at Antioch excelled, as *Agabus* † and others; among whom the Lord was especially delighted with *Barnabas* and *Saul*, who were sent immediately by the Spirit of Christ to enlighten all the neighbour countries*. So they two, joyned in one office, were as one eye to enlighten all the parts. But if the Church be considered in the members apart, the eyes thereof are knowledge and faith †: In this Church faith excelled, resting upon Christ alone without *Moses* his Ceremonies, which the Jewes would have thrust upon them*.

With one chaine of thy necke.] Chaines signified Lawes † binding as chaines. Now the Church of Antioch sending up *Paul* and *Barnabas* to Jerusalem, about the contention which *Corinthus* (as the stories thinke) and others raised at Antioch

† Act. 11.
27. 28. &
13. 1.

* Act. 13.
2. to Act.
14. 27.

† John 8.
56.

* Act. 15.
1, 2, 3.

† Cant. 1.
10.

tioc concerning the necessity of the Ceremoniall Lawes ; * the Apostles or Elders made a Law or decree to abrogate the Ceremonies , and yet enjoyne some things , partly necessary in themselves, as to avoid fornication ; partly necessary to avoid the offences of the Jews, as to abstaine from bloud , &c. This Law the Apostles and Elders hanged as a chaine upon the necke of the Church of Antioch and other Churchest: whence that Church received great consolation*, and the other Churches establishment and increase*.

*How faire is thy love my sister, my spouse !
how much better is thy love then wine, and
the smell of thine oyntments then all spices !*

How faire is thy love, my sister !] Sister implies the same , and such like Gentile Churches, whose love is here set forth,

First, by the fairnesse of it.

Secondly, by the strength, sweetnesse, cheerfulness, implied in the preferring it above wine.

How faire, and strong, and sweet, and cheerfull was the love of the Church of Antioch ; which aforehand prepared a contribution of their owne accord for

* A&. 15.

2.

† A&. 15.

23.—29.

* Ver. 31.

* A&. 16.

45.

Verse 10.

the

* A&.11.
29,30.

* 2 Cor.8.
1,5.

* Phil.4.
18.

Mat.25.
35,—40.
† Rev.2.2,
—4.

Verse 10.
* Cha.1.3.
† Rom.1.8.
Col.2.5.
1 Thes.1.
6,7,8.

Ver.11.

the poor Saints at Jerusalem, even * *every man according to his ability* ! The like or greater love seemed in the poore Churches of Macedonia *. A faire love for poore men to send reliefe to others : A strong love for deeply poore to send rich liberality ; yet more strong and sweet to pray the messengers with much intreaty to receive it, and a cheerefull love to doe all this in abundance of joy, and beyond the Apostles owne expectation.

This kinde of benevolence the Apostle callieth an odour of a sweet smell * ; it was sweeter and better then wine. All this love shewed to the poore Saints Christ takes here as done to himselfe, as he will also take it at the last day. The decayes of this first love shewes how great this love was at the first †.

The smell of thine oyntments then all spices.] Oyntments, are the graces of Gods Spirit * : These gave a sweet report farre and neare in those Primitive Churches †.

Thy lips O my Spouse, drop as the honey-combe : honey and milke are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

Thy

Thy lips, O my Spouse, drop as the honey-comb : honey and milk are under thy tongue.]

This commendeth the Doctrine and Ministry of those first Churches, in these foure respects :

First, for the readinesse and flowingnesse of it ; it dropped forth of it selfe, it needed not to be prest and constrained, as an honey-combe.

Secondly, for the sweernesse of it, as the honey or the honey-combe.

Thirdly, for the wholsomnesse of it, as milke.

The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.] Lebanon is full of sweet trees of spices growing in it, which yeeld a fragrant smell even as farre off. Garments are,

First, partly the wedding garments of Christs righteousness.

Secondly, partly the gracious carriage wherewith they cloathed themselves in their outward conversation : They cloathed and decked themselves with Christ, not onely to their Justification, but with his Spirit to their Sanctification ; which shewes forth it selfe in their humility, meeknesse, patience, honesty, faithfulness, diligence,

*Phil. 4. 8.

1 Thef. 4.

9, — 11.

1 Pct. 2.

12.

1 John 3.

22, 24.

Euseb. lib.

3. cap. 30.

Plin. Epist.

lib. 10.

Epist. 97.

Usc 1.

diligence, serviceablenesse of their outward carriage, so farre forth as that the Heathen smelled a sweet favour in their whole course; * yea, even in *Trajan's* time, when the smell of garments was not so strong: yet what a sweet testimony doth *Pliny* himselfe (though a persecutor) give of them, when hee said, hee could finde no fault with them, but that they rose early, and went into the woods to sing Hymnes to one *Jesus*?

This first is to reforme their judgments who speake of the Apostolicall Church as an infant and rude Church, whereas Christ, whose eyes were as a flame of fire, and who best knew it, commends it for perfection of beauty, and saith it was faire: So that if a Church were such, Christ might imbrace it with both his armes.

This is the Church excellent for her Ministers, excellent for common Christians, which had pure eyes of knowledge and faith; so that by how much neerer any Church comes to this, by so much the fairer it is, and by how much any Church comes short of it, by so much the fouler it is.

Secondly,

Secondly, this doth teach us that not abuses, but the toleration of them doth blemish a Church; and detract from the perfect beauty of it; for otherwise in the Primitive Churches were found Schisms, Heresies, a denying the Resurrection, uncharitable going to Law, Incest, love-feasts in the Lords Supper; strange tongues in the publicke worship; and yet because the Apostles stood out against these and reformed them, the Church still retaines her perfect beauty. In the Church of Ephesus there were false Apostles *, yet it was a Church; so it is, corruptions not cut off defile a Church: As we then desire the Church should be pure, leave we all our finnes and corruptions which may any way blemish the beauty of the Church.

Thirdly, this teaches us to be ready to extoll and acknowledge (as occasion serveth) other mens labours above our owne. Christ gathered a Church in his owne time which hee called, Faire *, but this Church gathered by his Apostles hee calleth, All faire *. It grieveth him not to ascribe thousands to himselfe, and ten thousands to them; yea, hee foretold

Use 2.

1 Cor. 12.
13, 14.
19—22.
& 14. &
15. Chap.

* Rev. 2. 2.

Use 3.

* Cant.
4. 1.

* Cant. 4.
7.

it

Joh. 14. 12.

* 1 Cor.

15. 10.

use 4.

it, and promised it freely aforehand: How farre was hee from a Spirit of envie and emulation, though indeed all their successe was by his grace and blessing, as Paul said, * *By the grace of God I am what I am*. The contrary Spirit of emulation hindereth Churches from taking that which is their own from one another.

Fourthly, hence we learn in what cases one Church may step from another, to wit,

First, when Christ leaveth a Church, and goeth away with us from it; *Come with me from Lebanon (my spouse,) with me*: So when Christ leaves and forsakes a Church, wee may leave it and goe out with him.

Secondly, when a Church is become an universall spotted Leopard, and a cruell Lion; blaspheming and persecuting the Gospell of Christ, as *

* Act. 19. 9.
& 13. 50,
51.

These things were found in *Rome*, from whence wee departed not in *England*, (blessed be the Lord) from whom the Separatists would have us to depart: But Christ still vouchsafes to be with us, converting soules, feeding his lambes, hearing our prayers; wee may also worship

Christ

Christ in trueth without feare of lawes, yea with acceptance. When Christ goes, let all his faithfull spouses goe with him; when there are dens of Lions, and men cannot keep the profession of Christ, but fall into their mouthes, then it is time to goe: But are there these causes now? Doth not Christ dwell here in the simplicity of his ordinances? As long as Christ is here in *England*, let us not goe away: but say, as *Peter* and * *John*, Lord, *to whom shall we goe? thou hast the words of eternall life.* As long as Christ is pleased to feed us, to drop milke and honey into our soules, let us not depart.

* Joh. 6. 68.

Fifthly, this may teach us how to knit the heart of Christ to us in ravishing affection, by cleaving to Christ with settled purpose *, by abounding in helpfulnesse to the Saints, by procuring and keeping faithfull shepherds, by burthening the Church not with many chaines of lawes, but onely with few, and those necessary: all these are formerly mentioned in the Church of *Antioch*. As ever we desire to have the Lord Jesus Christ to love us, let us grow in knowledge, faith, and all saving graces of his Spirit, and hereby

use 5.

* A. 2. 11.
23.

Verse 9.

shew

show our love to him, and then we shall find Christ ravished with our love.

use 6.
Verse 10.

Sixthly, this doth teach us what kind of love Christ acknowledgeth and embraceth; to wit, faire, strong, sweet, cheerfull, in an enlarging our selves to the reliefe of his poore Saints.

use 7.
Verse 11.

Seventhly, this doth teach Ministers how to make their Ministry amiable to Christ, (not to preach once a moneth, or quarterly, by the preaching of the Law, but) to be full as the honey-combe dropping out of it selfe, to preach sweet Doctrine as honey, and wholesome as milke, for the nourishment of Christs lambs.

The Pastors and Ministers of the Primitive Church did this without help of Universities; what a shame then is this for us to come short of them in such abundance of outward helps and meanes? Wouldest thou be a faithfull Minister? let thy Doctrine drop as honey, preach willingly, freely, sweetly, comfortably.

use 8.

Lastly, this may learne and stirre up Christians so to walke, and so to furnish our selves with inward graces, and with outward commendable carriage, as may yeeld a sweet favour and smell to God and

and man; that it may be like the smell of Lebanon, that men may smell a sweet savour that come neere them : let our hearts be inwardly furnished with the graces of God as with sweet oyntments; and our outward garments, our outward conversation so directed with honesty, integrity, humility, meeknesse and love, &c. that our names be not dishonoured, much lesse God by our meanes. Cast we aside stinking drunkennesse, whoredome, malice, covetousnesse, &c. And thus doing wee shall take away all offence; so doing, Christ shall look at us as his faire spouse, and say, *Thou art all faire my love*, ver. 7.

Rom. 13.
13, 14.

* *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.*.]

* Cant. 4.
12. to cha.
5. 2.

After the Church gathered by the Ministry of the Apostles, next followeth that under the ten persecutions, which is here described,

First, by her restraint, *verse 13.*

Secondly, by her privacy, *verse 14.*

Thirdly, by her fruitfulness, refreshing and watering others, *verse 15.*

Fourthly, by her prayer in this estate : wherein consider,

1. The Petitions ; which are three,
First, for the arising of the winde, and
coming into the South, *ver. 16.*

Secondly, for favourable blasts of it,
and that for this end, the flowing forth of
her spices.

Thirdly, that Christ would come in-
to his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits,
verse 16.

2. Christs answer thereunto :

First, he cometh into his garden.

Secondly, he gathereth and enjoyeth
the fruits of it.

Thirdly, he fills his Churches friends
with a large measure of plenty, *Chap. 5.1.*

Verse 12.

A garden :] The Church is here so
called, as *verse 13. an orchard*; or as it is
in the originall, *a Paradise*; as if this were
the garden of *Eden*. All the world is as a
wildernesse, or at least a wilde field;
onely, the Church is Gods garden or
orchard, in these three respects :

First, as the garden of Paradise was the
habitation of *Adam* in the estate of inno-
cency, so is the Church of all those who
are renewed into innocency.

Secondly, as in that garden were all
manner of pleasant and wholesome
herbs

herbs and trees growing, so in the Church are all manner of usefull and savoury spirits.

Thirdly, as a man walketh in his garden to refresh himselfe, so doth Christ walke in his Church, yea and calleth his friends thither to walke with him.

A spring, a fountaine:] Not because the Church is the fountaine of grace, but because, Christ being in it, it is the spring or fountaine of the waters of life unto all *.

* Zach.

13.1.
Psal. 87 7.

A garden, spring, fountaine, inclosed, shut up, sealed:] Not by a pale or wall of defence by Christian Magistrates, but rather shut up by restraint; for the word signifies to inclose or shut up, as with lockes and fetters.

Againe, the Church prayeth for the enlargement of the flowing of her spices, *ver. 16.* and therefore her present shutting up was uncomfortable to her.

The Church was then said to be shut up,

First, because under the persecutions it was shut up in prisons, and other places of punishment, as under lockes and fetters.

Secondly, because the Church then assembled in private close places, woods, dens, &c. and not in the open places of townes or cities.

Thirdly, because it was shut up from free access of forainers, men without; neither were the Emperours willing their Subjects should repaire to them, nor the Church willing to admit all promiscuously.

Verse 13,
14.

Thy plants :] That is, thy children or members, as an orchard of *Pomegranates, Camphire*, verſe 14. *Spikenard, Saſſon, Calamus, Cinnamon*. The children of the Church are compared to theſe wholeſome and ſweet fruits, trees, herbs, in a double reſpect:

First, becauſe the vertues of theſe fruits and ſpices are eſpecially ſeen when they are cut and powred out, or beaten, or burned, or bruised: So it is with the graces of Gods children; they are chiefly exerciſed by the hard dealing of perſecutors.

Secondly, there was in the faithfull then perſecuted a reſemblance of the vertues of theſe fruits and ſpices.

P. mēgrā-
nates.

Pomegranates repreſſe and reſtraine the

the heat of choler, the malignity of fevers, the loosenesse of the belly ; they also comfort the stomack and bowels, and prevent faintings and swoonings.

Camphire, with his sweetnesse of smell, delighteth and strengthneth the spirits, cheereth up the minde, helps the stone, restraines ulcers.

Camphire.

Spikenard stayeth distillations from the head, strengthneth the stomack, digesteth cold humours, helpeth conception.

Spikenard.

Safron thinneth flegme, helps lethargies, coughs, and plurisies, furthereth digestion, comforteth the heart, redresses the rottenesse of the other parts, which also are strengthened.

Safron.

Calamus helps the passages of the urine, and the faults of the reines, helpeth also the womb and conception.

Calamus.

Cinnamon strengthneth and cheereth the spirits and minde, dryeth up rotten matter, helpeth against poyson, warmth and strengthneth the stomacke to digestion.

Cinnamon.

Frankincense restraineth and helpeth ulcers, gouts, fluxes of bloud, cleanseth and glueth up wounds and ulcers.

Frankincense.

Myrrh.

Myrrh refresheth the braine, drieth up superfluous humours, helpeth straitnesse of breath, restraineth ulcers and itchinesse, filleth ulcers and wounds with flesh.

Aloes.

*Fernelius
de method.
medend. lib.*

4. cap. 7, 9,
19, 21, 22,
26, 27. lib.
6. cap. 12,
13, 14, 12.

Aloes cleanse tough flegme and choler, drie up raw and cold humours, preserve the rest from putrefying, open obstructions, strengthen the stomach strongly.

Sutable to the vertues of these fruits and spices, persecution bred and stirred up in the faithfull graces of like efficacy, to restraîne heats of emulation, contention, ambition, to repressse ulcers of malignity and dis-affection one to another, to heale the coldnesse, hypocrisie, and rottennesse of their spirits; to stay distillations of cold raw matters, dropping from the head Bishops of Rome; as also to strengthen appetite to the Word, to comfort the faint-hearted, to knit the members together.

Verse 15.

A fountaine of gardens, &c.] For the Church, pouring out her confessions and martyrdomes for the truth, propagated and watered many Churches; for, *sanguis martyrum* was *semen Ecclesie*, a *Well of living waters*. The Church was not then

Joh. 4. 10.

then dried up, but plentifully stored with the graces of the spirit, *Streames from Lebanon*: The Churches were stored with such graces of the Spirit, as streamed and issued out from the mountaines of Israel, the writings of the Prophets and Apostles.

Awake, or arise, O Northwind, &c.] The Churches desire that a winde might arise in the North, and come into the South: to wit, that *Constantine*, born in *York*, would come into the southerne parts, and take the Empire upon him, (*and blow upon my garden*) driving away the blasts of Easterly persecutions, and breath favourably and wholesomly upon the Church, cooling the tempestuous heats of the persecutions which the Church endured. The Church prayeth not the South to come, but the North to come into the South, else

Verse 16.

First, the word *blow*, if it had reference to both winds, should have been of the plurall number.

Secondly, *Northwinde* and *Southwinde* blowing together, would interrupt and crosse one another by their contrariety.

Verse 16.

That the spices thereof may flow forth :]
 That the Gospell and Ordinances of
 Christ and the graces of his children,
 which were there restrained from their
 free manifestation by the persecutions,
 might have free passage.

*Let my beloved come into his garden, and
 eat of his pleasant fruits.]* Let Constantine
 cometo them, and partake of the benefits
 of the Churches serviceable graces to
 God and him.



THE



THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 5.

I Am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my Myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my boney-combe with my boney, I have drunk my wine with my milke: eate, O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.

2 I sleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to mee my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

3 I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands
dropped

dropped with Myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrh, upon the bandles of the Locke.

6 I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wals took away my vails from me.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that yee tell him, that I am sick of love.

9 What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeest among ten thousand.

11 His head is as the most fine gold, his lockes are bushy and black as a Raven.

12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fely set.

13 His cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrh.

14 His hands are as gold rings set with the Beryl: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Sappires.

15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold, his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

16 His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether

*ther lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.*

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant. 5. verse 1. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my Myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunke my wine with my milke : eat, O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.]

Constantine came into the Church, enjoyed the fellowship of it, did partake in all the parts of it, yea and richly endowed it; so that the Church and all her friends did eat and drinke, yea and did drink abundantly of wealth, preferments, &c. whence it was that she fell into a deep sleep.

First, this serves to stirre us up to thankfulness and fruitfulness to God, who hath planted us not in the wilderness of the world, but in the garden of his Church. If wee now transgresse as *Adam* did, eating of the forbidden fruits, * God will take his garden from us, and cast us out of it.

Chap. 5.
verse 1.

Ch. 4. 12.

Use 1.

* Gen. 3. 6,
11, 12, 24.
& 2. 17.

Secondly,

Use 2.

Secondly, this lets us see, all ly situations of the earth are but barren and deserts, in comparison of the Church is a garden, and in it is a fountaine of living waters for ever soule.

Use 3.

Mat. 5. 14.

Thirdly, though the Church is sometimes in open view of all, as a Candle on a hill; yet it is sometimes also inclosed, shut up, sealed.

Use 4.

Fourthly, when the Church is in corners and conventicles, they are not of it; it hatch not treasons, schisms, but still remaineth as a garden, a fountaine, yeelding sweet savour and wholesome fruits.

Use 5.

Fifthly, see the wonderfull afflictions and persecutions to the Church; what savour, and wholesome graces are thereby exercised; how mightily doth the Church spread when it is most restrained.

Use 6.

Sixthly, see then what the weapons of the Church were against their enemies; not daggers, darts, powder, rebellions, treasons, &c. but prayer in more seasonable times.

Use 7.

Seventhly, wee are to be still

pray, that God would now stirre up a wholesome Northwinde, to blow favourably upon the Churches beyond the seas, and strongly against their enemies.

Eightly, this may teach us whilest we enjoy at home these faire blasts, not to streame forth the unfavoury corruptions of our owne spirits, but the sweet graces of God; else wee abuse these sweet opportunities wee doe enjoy.

Use 8.

Lastly, it is a time of much rejoycing when God stirreth up Kings and Princes to come into the fellowship of the Church, and to partake of Gods ordinances in the same.

Use 9.

I sleepe, but my heart waketh, it is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, &c.]

Cant. 5. 2.
to Chapt.
6. ver. 4.

Now followeth the description of the estate of the Church from *Constantines* time to the time of restoring of the Gospell, and reforming of the Church by the Ministry of *Luther*, and other late Divines.

After that *Constantine* had largely endowed the Church with peace, and wealth, and honour; it fell into an estate

of

of carnall security; which carnall security is described,

First, by a comparison, resembling it to sleep; which sleep of hers is amplified by the divers conditions, yet *my heart waketh.*

Secondly, by the carriage of Christ towards her in this her sleepe; where observe,

1. The meanes he useth to awake and stirre her up: which were,

First, calling to her and knocking, as *verse 2.*

Secondly, putting in his hand by the hole of the doore, *verse 4.*

2. The successe of those meanes, or the respect she gave to them, or the use shee made of them; which was double,

First, his calling and knocking she neglecteth wholly, upon very slight pretences and excuses, *verse 3.*

Secondly, his putting in his hand by the hole of the doore;

1. She is affected with it: *My bowels were moved for him, ver. 4.*

2. She upon it sought him: which is further set forth,

First, by the degrees of her seeking him:

1. She

1. She arose to open to him, *verse 5.*

2. Her hands and fingers dropped Myrrh upon the handles of the locke, *verse 5.*

3. She opened to her beloved, *ver. 6.*

Secondly, by the fruits or successe of her seeking, where is interpreted the fruit or successe of these two degrees of her seeking, in regard,

1. Of Christ, *he was gone, he had withdrawn himself, &c. ver. 6.*

2. Of the watchmen, of whom shee asketh not for her beloved; but they finding her seeking Christ, they

First, smote her.

Secondly, wounded her.

Thirdly, tooke away her vaile from her, *verse 7.*

Fourthly, she, not discouraged with this bad dealing and hard usage of the watchmen, added a fourth degree in her seeking of Christ; shee chargeth the daughters of Jerusalem to move Christ for her, *ver. 8.* The successe or fruit whereof is added; for upon this charge,

1. The daughters of Jerusalem are stirred and occasioned to enquire of her, who Christ is, *verse 9.*

2. She

2. She by their enquiry is occ
to describe him,

First, by his colours, *verse 10.*

Secondly, by his eminency, *ver*

Thirdly, by his severall memb
parts, *verse 11, — 16.*

Fourthly, by his amiableness
16.

3. The daughters of Jerusa
this her description of him, are
up to affect him, and to promi
fellowship in seeking of him wit
Chap. 6. 1.

Verse 2.

I sleepe.] The Church surfeiting
abundance of prosperity in *Conj*
time, neglected the purity and
both of doctrine and worship, an
ved corruptions; of which were
to Saints, building of Temples to
Superstitious regard of their re
Images, and their worship, Cere
annexed to their Sacraments, ch
meats, affecting and applauding M
life, Purgatory, &c.

My heart waketh.] The Church
still awake,

First, to hearty devotion, accor
their knowledge, and beyond it.

Se

Secondly, to discerne some such grosse heresies as quenched the heart and life of Christianity; as the impiety of *Arius*, denying the Godhead of Christ; *Macedonius* and *Eunomius*, denying the person of the holy Ghost; of *Nestorius*, dividing the person in Christ; of *Eutyches*, confounding their natures: other straw and stubble built upon the foundation they neglected.

It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open.] Christ used good meanes to awaken his spouse, and to raise her up from this carnall security.

First, he calleth to her in the voice of sundry good Divines, who complained of the intolerable burthen of humane inventions, wherewith the common Christians were defiled and dabled, as Christ here complaineth: His locks and haire were full of the drops of the night; drops with coldnesse of Religion and darknesse of ignorance ingendred.

August.ep.
119.

Secondly, he knocked by the raps and blowes which *Constantius*, *Valens*, and *Julian* gave to the Church; the two former persecuting the orthodox Bishops and Ministers and other Christians, in favour of the *Arians*; and *Julian* making flat

K

Apostasie

Verse 3.

Apostasie from the Church, and subtly supplanting the nursing of Religion.

I put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

I have put off my coat.] Thus upon sleight pretence the Church refuseth to open to Christ: shee pretends Religion and the worship of God would appear too naked, if it were not cloathed with goodly and comely humane inventions; how then should shee in so naked a manner open to Christ? Humane inventions do not clothe Religion, or the Church professing it with any comely ornaments; but, as it were with warme blankets, lap her and lull her asleep in the bed of perfunctory worship and carnall security.

I do not here conceive that the Church acknowledgeth she hath cast off her garments of Christs righteousness; for then how should shee remaine the spouse of Christ? yea, how then should her heart have beene otherwise then asleep too? but onely shee pleadeth shee should appeare too naked if shee should open to Christ, if she should worship him in the simplicity and nakednesse of his simple ordinances.

I have washed my feet.] Not with the laver of regeneration, for that would have been no impediment, but a furtherance to the pure worship of God; but shee had washed her feet, shee had freed and cleansed her conversation from defilements of secular affairs: shee had taken up a devout regard of virginity, or hermitish or monkish solitary retiredness, shee being cleansed and washed in these devices, cannot betake her selfe to worship the Lord in his simple ordinances, and in the wayes of her calling, without some defilement: Thus marriage and worldly businesse (though both allowed by God, yet) seem a defilement, in comparison of more strict superstitious devotion.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.

Vet. 4.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore:] Or, *My beloved put downe his hand by the hole of the doore.*] Either of which imply, that Christ did at first use meanes for himselfe to open the doore, when shee would not; attempting to remove the impediments which hinder him from enjoying his spouse: First, put his

hand by the hole of the doore, when hee stirred up Christian Emperors, such as *Martianus*, and both the *Theodosii*, to call Synods, and to command the Fathers assembled, to give all diligence to root out all heresies, and depravations of doctrine and worship, that the pure and holy faith might shine forth:

How easily might the Church upon such encouragements, have broken the barres and bolts of Superstition crept into the worship of God, whereby Christ was debarred from drawing neer to them? The Bishops assembled in those Councils of that time, condemned those gross heresies which blasphemed the doctrine of the Trinity; but how deeply did they neglect to redresse all other enormities and corruptions? Besides, Christ is said to put in his hand by the hole of the door, when he puts his spirit, which is the power and finger of God*, into the hearts of his people, whereby they are enlightened to know him better, and stirre up men honestly to seeke after him. So Christ eulightened and stirred up *Leo Isauricus*, *Constantines* sonne, and *Leo Copronymus*, to bend their best endeavours to root out Idolatry, and

* Mat. 12.
28. with
Luke 11.
20.

to remove Images, which were one of the chiefest abuses in Gods worship.

My bowells were moved for him.] These good Princes, and other Christians at that time were strongly and inwardly affected to the purity of Gods worship, in which alone Christ is found.

I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locke.

Verſes.

I rose up to open to my beloved.] The Church under these good Emperours rose up out of the blankets of these humane inventions wherewith shee was covered, in a bed of sleeping devotion, and endeavoured to restore openly the simplicity of Gods worship, rejecting Images and Idolatry.

My hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locke.] The endeavours of the Church were sweet, and delectable, and acceptable to Christ, and savoury to the people, to preserve them, as myrrh, from further persecution, when *Constantine* the sonne of *Leo Isauricus*, called the seventh *Constantinopolitan* Councell, and there tru-

ly and solemnly convinced and condemned the worship of Images: As also w Charles the Great did the like some years after, at a Synod in Frankford.

Ver. 6.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawne himsefse, and was gone. soule failed when he spake: I sought him, I could not finde him: I called him, but gave me no answer.

I opened to my beloved.] This attē of the Church in executing in some pl the decrees of these Synods, was an opening of the doore to Christ: Images Idolatry being shut forth, there is a d open for Christ to enter.

But my beloved had withdrawne him and was gone.] Christ did not de to reveale himself in their publike assemblies, though Images were in some p well removed, both because those de for removing of Images were not g rally received and executed, through coming in of the Bishop of Rome: because the worship of God was stil of Heathenish and Jewish superstition which Christ tooke no pleasure in.

My soule failed when hee spake.] Faithfull in those times were assem

with feare and grieve, to consider how Christ now speaketh to them as farre off, comes not neare to their hearts and consciences; so that now, though they used such meanes to finde him as the times afforded, yet Christ did take no pleasure in those meanes, in those worships, nor to their sense, in those that used them.

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the walls tooke away my vaile from me.

Ver. 7.

The watchmen that went about the city found mee.] These watchmen are the Bishops and Ministers of that time; as also the *keepers of the wals* may well be the Magistrates: for civill government is a wall of defence to the Church of God.

They found mee.] And yet the Church enquireth not of them, as shee had done before of other watchmen, * *Have you not seen him whom my soule loves?* For she knew these watchmen were of another spirit, rather wolves in sheeps cloathing, and more ready to beat her from Christ, then to bring her to Christ. They smote me with censures of Excommunications, as Gregory the third Pope of Rome did *Leo Isauri-*

* Chap.
3.3.

ricus for his endeavours. Afterwards, when sundry Christians, having intelligence that the Bishops and Doctors were assembled in a temple at *Byzantium*, to give sentence for restoring of Images, in the dayes of the Empresse *Irene*, came upon them, and forced them with weapons to leave off such decrees; these people were afterwards disarmed and banished into sundry Islands. Thus were the faithfull smitten with the censures of Excommunication by the watchmen of the city; of banishment by the keepers of the walls.

They wounded me.] With the Canons of the second Council of *Nice*; whither that Councell, assembled in the temple of *Byzantium*, and scattered by the people, was afterwards translated by the Council of the Bishops of Rome. In this Councell Images were againe restored, to the great griefe of the godly, yea, to the wounding of their hearts. The sentence of a generall Councell in the behalfe of any error is no small wound to the whole Church.

They tooke away my vaile from mee.] When they forced the Bishops of *Rhodes*, *Nice*, *Neo-Cesarea*, *Hierapolis*, and others

to recantation, who before had worthily opposed Images. To bring men to open recantation, to lay open their nakednesse, especially when they recant from the truth, is to take away the vaile.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, if yee finde my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sicke of love.

Verse 8.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem.] The Church finding her selfe so hardly dealt with by the Ministers and Magistrates, would not give over her search after Christ; yet now seeketh him in the fellowship of private Christians, and stirreth them up to pray for her.

Tell him I am sicke of love.] That is, in your prayers acknowledge that the Church is ready to faile and perish for want of his presence and fellowship in his publike ordinances.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? &c.]

Verse 9.

The Christians, the daughters of Ierusalem, from this day forward, to the dayes of *Peter Waldus* (of whom the *Waldenses* tooke their name, were very ignorant of Christ, and therefore they aske who hee

was,

was, and wherein better then another : But in stead of him they magnified the Church ; *Holy mother Church* was all in all with them : Her they acknowledged to be fairest among women ; though they see nothing in Christ better then in another.

Vcr. 10.

My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.]
Thus *Petrus Waldus*, a citizen of Lions, opened Christ to the daughters of Jerusalem, to the children of the Church, setting before them the white innocency of true holinesse in him, and the ruddy scarlet dye of his death. The righteousness and death of Christ plainly, yet powerfully opened by him, brought many to behold Christ, and to professe him ; who (when by persecution stirred up against them by the Bishop of Rome, they were dispersed into many places) multiplied exceedingly ; and being then called *Albingenses*, in many battels fought against the souldiers which Pope *Innocent* the third had sent against them, under conduct of *Simon Mountesford*, and others signed with the crosse : in many of which the *Albingenses* prevailed, helped by *Reymund* Earle of *Thelus*, and *Peter* King of *Aragon* ; though
after-

afterwards they were overcome and scattered further into many places of Christendome. So in regard of these troupes of many thousands, Christ is here called the *standard-bearer*, as the word signifieth, or the *choyce of ten thousand*. Again, at that time Christ may be said to be white and ruddy in regard of his members, who were then white with innocency of life, yet ruddy, enduring persecution.

His head is as the most fine gold, his lockes are busbie, and black as a raven.

VER. 17.

His head is as the most fine gold.] Christ comes now to be described in his members more particularly: This head of gold Christ shewed on the earth in the person of *Frederick*, the second Emperour of *Rome*, a Prince of much purity and worth, as an head of the Church of fine gold: He contended with many Popes about the headship of the Church, advanced the headship of Christ and of himselfe, his Vicegerents, above the counterfeit head of the Popes Supremacy. He wrestled for Christ against them with much difficulty, yet prevailed, so that even in the Popish schools, his election of God was agreed and condescended unto by sundry.

His

His locks are bushie, or curled, and black as a raven.] Curled black haire is a signe of heat and courage, and wit in him that it groweth upon: such was the Emperour himself, and such were the common Christians of that age that did depend upon their Emperour; they stuck close to him: learned men with wit, more then former ages had yeelded, and souldiers with courage maintained his person and cause.

Verse 12.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly set.]

Doves, diving in rivers of waters, dive their bellies deep into the waters; so that their eyes looke close and narrowly upon it.

First, the eyes are here set forth by their care of the Church; hee is not so farre off removed from it, that he had need of the Pope to be his visible Vicar to look to it.

Secondly, by their milde innocency, implied, in that they are doves eyes and washed with milke; whereas the Popes eyes were as hawkes eyes, looking eagerly after the prey.

Thirdly, by their fit standing, so as they may well looke to the whole body; whereas

whereas the Popes eyes cannot possibly watch to looke well to the estate of the Church so far off him.

To this purpose tended the doctrine of the faithful Divines in the following age, such as *Michael Cefenus*, *Petrus de Carbania*, *Iohannes de Poliaco*, and such as followed them.

His cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers : his lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrh.

Ver. 13.

His cheekes are as a bed of spices.]

Cheekes imply the outward face of the faithfull Church, for the cheekes are a place most conspicuous, which shewes that the faithfull of those times were as beds of spices and sweet flowers, to wit, not gathered into any set garden, as afterwards in *Luthers* time,* but scattered here and there, yet of sweet and precious savour in the nostrils of Christ: yea, one *Nicholaus de Bibrath*, living about that time, compareth Faith and Piety in the Church to spice rare and deare.

*Ch. 6. 2.

His lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.] The doctrine of the Church at those times was such, as like myrrh, served to preserve the faithfull from putrefaction,

* Rev. 2.
25.

trefaction, according to that, * *That ye have already, hold fast till I come.*

† Can. 4.
11.

Primitive Apostolique Church he dropped like an honey-combe, being strong sweet relish to delight and not to full growth: † But the lips of Church drop rather myrrh then honey they rather preserved some truth of then yeelded any abundant nourish to procure increase to the Church.

Vcr. 14.

His hands are as gold rings set with Berill: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

His hands are as gold rings set with Berill.] Hands are instruments of action their being set with *gold rings* import their purity and dignity: The *Berill* catcheth moisture and dimme sight: *Franciscus Rudis, de Goma. libr. 2. cap. 8.* these shew that the Ministry of the spell should be then more powerfull indeed God, about that time, Anno 1300 stirred up *Dantes, Marcellinus, Poterius, Ockham, Gregorius Ariminensis, Petrarch, Wickliffe*, and many more, whose Ministry brought on so many, that some counted it the first resurrection; yea Magistrates of that time, *Ludovicus B.*

was the Emperour, *Philip of France*, *Edward* the third of *England*, stood out in many things against the Pope, as those whose hands had got more strength, and better felt their owne worth, and whose eyes were cleered to see more light then their predecessours.

His belly as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.] The belly is an hidden part of the body, yet such from which the rest is nourished; which fitly resembleth the Sacraments here, as also *Ch. 7. 2.* which being hid from those that are without, yet nourish the whole body, as an heap of wheat. The doctrine of the Sacraments, and the pure administration of the same, was at this time restored by *John Wickliff*, & embraced by his followers, though condemned in the Councell of Constance. These Sacraments are said to be overlaid with Saphires, whose property is to strengthen and cherish the principall solid parts,* because of the efficacy of the Sacraments truly taught and administred, to strengthen and quicken Gods graces in us.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

* Rucus
Deginus
l. 1. cap. 2.

Ver. 15.

His

His legs are as pillars of marble, [sockets of fine gold.] These two legs to be *Iohn Hus* and *Ierome of Prague* stood constantly in defence of the even unto death, being established truth and grace of God, as it were of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.

His countenance is as Lebanon.]

The faithfull grew so plentifull *hemia*, that they seemed even to the verſary to be like a thick wood (as and firme) which they were not a hew downe; and therefore they forced in the Councell of *Constance*, low them the use of the cup in the Supper, because they could not by hand keep them from it.

Excellent as the cedars.] The cedar a tree eminent for tallnesse, and firmnesse or durablenesse: such was the face and countenance of the Church served to grow up in conspicuous nency, and in soundnesse of love to truth, that the Popish Teachers were able to corrupt them any longer their seducements.

Verse 16.

His mouth is most sweet, yea, altogether lovely. This is my beloved.

and this is my friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem.

His mouth is most sweet.]

The doctrine of the Gospell was taught more and more favourly by *Johannes Rochesana*, and other Ministers in *Bohemia*.

He is altogether lovely, or desireable.]

Christ then began againe so to dispense himselfe to his Church, in giving them the faith and sense of his goodnesse, that now they saw or found nothing in Christ, or in the profession of his name, but what was wholly desirable. The rebukes of Christ began now to seeme greater riches, then the treasures of *Egypt* or *Babylon* in some former ages: they that saw the truth were often brought to yeeld and recant; but these saw nothing to be more desired then Christ. Besides, he is now called holy and desirable, because so many so generally were stirred up to desire and seeke reformation. The Regions were white and ready to the harvest, else *Luther* had not found such good successe in his Ministry.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend.]

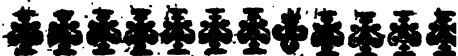
The doctrine of certainty of our ado-

Heb. 11.
26.

L

prion;

tion, Justification, Salvation, began
more plainly to be discerned and ac-
ledged: Christ is not onely faire a
fireable in himself; but then the C
could more boldly say, *This is m
ved, this is my friend.*



THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 6.

WHither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

2 My beloved is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

3 I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

4 Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

5 Turne away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy haire is as a flock of goats that appeare from Gilead.

6 Thy teeth are as a flock of sheepe which goe

up from the washing, whereof every one beareth
twinnings, and there is not one barren among them.

7 As a piece of Pomegranate are thy temples
within thy lockes.

8 There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore
Concubines, and virgins without number.

9 My Dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the
onely one of her Mother, shee is the choise one of her
that bare her: The daughters saw her, and blessed
her: yea, the Queenes and the Concubines, and they
praised her.

10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
faire as the moone, cleare as the sunne, and terrible as
an army with banners?

11 I went downe into the garden of nuts to see
the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the Vine
flourished, and the Pomegranats budded.

12 Or ever I was aware, my soule made me like
the Chariots of Aminadab.

13 Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne, re-
turne, that we may looke upon thee: what will you see
in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two
armies.

THE

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant.6.1. *Whither is thy beloved gone?
O thou fairest among women, whither is thy
beloved turned aside? that we may seeke him
with thee.*]

THe Churches affectionate describing
and praising Christ, stirred up many
then to looke after Religion and Reforma-
tion.

Chap.6.
verse 1.

First, wee may here see the danger of
surfeiting the Church with wealth and
pleasures and honour. *Constantine* had in
the first verse enebriated the Church with
wealth and honour, and hereupon the
Church falleth into a long sleepe, which
shee shooke not wholly off for many ages.
No wonder then of that speech heard
from heaven, *Hodie venenum concidit in
Ecclesiam*: Now is poyson powred or
fallen into the Church.

use 1.

Secondly, this may let us see that they
have not the spirit of the Church of
Christ, that when they heare many voices
in Religion carried sundry waies, know
not whom to follow, cannot discern which

use 2.

is the true voice of Christ among them : This Church here could discern the voice of Christ even in her sleep, how much more easily if she had been well awake :

use 3.

Thirdly, this is to exhort both Ministers and other faithfull Christians to watchfulnesse, lest otherwise corruption in doctrine and worship grow amongst the people, till the locks of Christ be wholly dabled with superstitions ; the locks of Christ, to wit, the common Christians.

use 4.

Fourthly, this may teach us to know that they provide not well for the direction of their own judgements, that depend upon the voice of the ancient Churches for their chief pattern and guidance in doctrine and worship : who would build upon the words of a man (though otherwise a good man) when he is half asleep :

use 5.

Fifthly, hence we may discern it is better the Church should open to Christ, appearing before him in the naked simplicity of his worship, then to cover our selves and his worship with the blankets and inventions of mens weaving, which will but hull the Church asleep in drowsie performances of perfunctory worship, and cause Christ to withdraw himself from us.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, this may teach us to know, to our shame and grieve, that our drowfie hearts will neglect to open to Christ upon his calling and knocking, unless he be pleased to put the finger of his spirit into our hearts, to open an entrance for himselfe.

use 6.

Seventhly, the faithfull must not wonder, if, opening their hearts to Christ and seeking after him, sometimes they finde him not; for it was so with the Church here, and hath been so with the faithfull in all ages: We neglecting to receive him when hee offereth himself, wee must not wonder if for a time he neglect us.

use 7.

Eighthly, we may from hence learn that bad Ministers wil sooner bear with any disorder in people, then serious seeking after Christ, and after the purity of ordinances.

use 8.

Ninthly, we may here see persecutions alienate not the affections of the faithful, but inflame them to more ardency and earnest pursuite after Christ, as this Church did.

use 9.

Tenthly, it may be known the Church hath lye in a deep sleep, when common Christians can more acknowledge the Church then Christ himself, when they can see her to be *the fairest among women*, but know not any eminent worth in Christ.

use 10.

- use 11. Eleventhly, the estate of many Churches, in many ages, maketh but one body of Christ; in every of which Christ manifesteth himself, in some members more eminently then in others.
- use 12. Twelvethly, Christ had his faithfull people and members in the world before *Luther* was born; yea, he shewed himself glorious in sundry of them, in the darkeſt times of Popery.
- use 13. Thirteenthly, in Christ it's well known there is nothing but what is lovely and desirable; even persecutions for his sake are lovely and glorious.
- use 14. Fourteenthly, it is no comfort, or but small, to know Christ to be every way precious and excellent, unlesse wee can also say, hee is ours: *This is my beloved, this is my friend, O yee daughters of Jerusalem.*
- use 15. Fifteenthly, the affectionate faithfull preaching and setting forth of Christ, stirreth up in others a saving knowledge of Christ, and hearty affection to him. The Church here describeth Christ affectionately and faithfully, speaketh of him as her owne; whence the daughters of *Jerusalem* are converted and stirred up to seek after him. Lastly,

Lastly, hearts truly touched with sincere desire after Christ, chose rather to seek him in the Church, in the fellowship of the Church, then by waies of separation, as this Church did: *Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seeke him with thee.*

use 16.

My beloved is gone into his garden.] The holy Ghost in these words descendeth to set forth the state of the Church reformed by the Ministry of *Luther*, and other late Divines, as in the verse following the calling of the *Jewes*.

Cant.6.
2.—9.

This reformed Church is diversly described:

First, by Christs visitation of her, together with the ends thereof:

1. *To feed in the gardens.*
2. *To gather lilies, verse 2.*

Secondly, by her mutuall fellowship with Christ, *verse 3.*

Thirdly, by her degrees of rising: wherein she is likened to be, *verse 4.*

1. *As Tirzah.*
2. *As Jerusalem.*
3. *As an army with Banners.*

Fourthly, by her members, *ver. 5, 6, 7.*

1. *Eyes.*

2. *Haire.*

2. *Haire*.

3. *Teeth*.

4. *Temples*.

Fiftly, by comparing the severall med Churches, as amongst them and preferring one above the rest reformed Churches there.

1. As *Queenes*, 60.

2. As *Concubines*, 80.

3. As *Virgins without number*, ve

4. As a *Dove*; and who,

First, to Christ is undefiled.

Secondly, to the whole Church *only one*, as a *choice one*.

Thirdly, to the rest :

1. Blessed, to the *Daughters*.

2. Praised, to the *Queenes* and *bines*, verse 8, 9.

Verse 2.

My beloved is gone downe into his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the garden to gather lilies.

My beloved is gone downe into the garden :] The Church, which Christ visited, and wherein he was first found that generall Apostasie where the Church sought Christ and could not find him.

In the former Chapter was the C

of *Wittenburg* reformed by the Ministry of *Luther*, which was a garden; being

First, stored with variety of godly people, as sweet flowers set in order, some teaching, some hearing.

Secondly, fenced in as with a hedge, pale or wall, by the protection of *Frederick* the good Duke of *Saxony*.

Thirdly, a place wherein Christ walked (as wee doe in our gardens) to refresh himselfe and his friends.

Is gone downe into his garden.] Descending from those famous cities and eminent places of *Rome* and *Constantinople*, into a meane country city.

To the beds of spices.] Because in *Germany*, at that time, sundry Christians were called and sorted into severall beds and companies in severall places, though not attaining at the first to be so many gardens, so many severall Churches.

To seed in the garden.] In proceesse of time, these severall beds of spices (companies of Christians) grew up to the fashion of just and full Churches in *Zurich*, *Stranburgh*, *Brassell*, *Berne*, *Geneva*, besides those in *Habsia* and *Prussia*.

To seed,]

First,

First, both himselfe with his peoples prayers, and other worship and obedience.

Secondly, his people with his Word and Sacraments, and other ordinances.

And to *gather lilies*; that is, to gather and call more and more faithfull Christians out of a wild field of worldly people into the fellowship of his Church, as it were, *to gather lilies into his garden.*

They are called *lilies*,

First, for their fairenesse.

Secondly, for excellency, or eminency.

Thirdly, for Gods care in providing for them beyond their owne labour and industry.

I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.] Which words imply foure things:

First, that the Church had familiar fellowship with Christ in his holy publike ordinances; especially in the maine doctrine of pardon of sins by Christs blood alone, and of justification by faith.

Secondly, that shee enjoyed this fellowship with him, before the time of her deliverance out of a *Babylonish*, or *Romish* captivity: * for the same words
are

Mat. 6. 29.

Pro. 12. 26.

Mat. 6. 28,
29.

Verse 3.

* Chap. 2.
Verse 15.

are used upon the deliverance out of *Babel*, and enjoying Gods ordinances in their owne country ; but with this difference: there the Church saith, *My beloved is mine, and I am his* ; because, first, hee delivered her out of *Babel*, before hee gave her the free use of his ordinances ; but here the Church saith, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine* ; because shee first found Christ in his ordinances, before shee enjoyed deliverance from subjection to *Rome* ; for *Luther* preached against the Popes pardons, before he rejected the supremacy of the Pope.

Thirdly, their open profession of their fellowship with Christ, when the Princes of *Germany* openly protested against the Masse, and other corruptions in the Church, and avowed the defence of the reformation begun ; whence they were afterward called Protestants.

Fourthly, Christs gracious protection of those Churches, specially in their first beginnings : for how should *Luther* (a poore Priest) have attempted and gone through with so great a work, against such great and generall opposition, and in the end die quietly in his bed, if Christ

Sleyden.
lib. 6, 7.

had

had not held him as it were in his arm
Hee feedeth among the lilies.] Her
 fresheth himsele and strengtheneth
 people, conversing amongst them;
 strove for whirenesse, and purity, an
 formation.

Verse 4.

*Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Ti
 comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army
 banners.*

Thou art beautifull as Tirzah.] T
 was the chiefe city of the Kingdon
 Israel, after they had separated themse
 from Judah, untill Samaria was a
 ward builded *.

* 1 King.
 14. 17. &
 15. 33.

The city and Governors of it (the
 ple having recourse to it for judgem
 rather then to Jerusalem) were at fi
 disgrace and obloquie with the ~~King~~
 their schisme and separation from
 house of David at Jerusalem; and for
 rebellion against the King of Judah;
 this did not diminish her beauty, but
 this separation was from God.

1 Kings
 12. 24.

Afterward Tirzah lost her beauty
 erecting the golden Calves, and fal
 off (not onely from the idolatry of
 men wherein they did well, but) from
 true worship of God, restored and co

mued in the Temple of *Ierusalem*. But *Solomon* here speaketh of *Tirzah* while shee retained her beauty : And indeed the reformed Churches were in this like unto *Tirzah* ; at first in disgrace and obloquie for their separation from *Rome*, and rebellion against the Emperour and other Princes ; and yet neverthelesse beautifull, because this separation was from God, in regard of Idolatries of the Church of *Rome*, greater then those of *Solomon*.

Thus the Duke of *Saxony* and the Landgrave of *Hassia* were proscribed as Rebels against the Emperour, and yet their cause was beautifull and good. The faithfull at that time in England were burned in King *Henry* the Eighth's daies, as Hereticks, and refractory Subjects or Rebels, yet beautifull in Gods sight.

Comely as Ierusalem.] In proceffe of time the Church wore out the suspicion and disgrace of heresie, and separation and rebellion, and was countenanced and adorned by Royall Lawes in the daies of King *Edward* the Sixth, and by Lawes of the Empire tolerating the Protestant Princes, so that the Church seemed as *Ierusalem*, the state of Princes, the true Church

Pfal. 12. 2,
3, — 5.

Church of God, and at unity also v
it self, wherein the comelineffe conf
for, as *Iherusalem* had been three C
Zion, Salem, Millo, and all three wer
together into one *Iherusalem*: so the
differences between *Lutherans* and
nists in doctrine and discipline at G
were all compacted together in brot
love; in their harmony of confession

Terrible as an army with banners.
Church was beautifull as *Tirzah* in
Henry the Eighths time, comely as *Jf*
lem in King *Edward* the Sixths time,
ble as an army with banners in Queen
beths time, when the Protestant P
grew formidable to the Emperour,
land and the low Countries to the
ard and Pope. How terrible was that
throw which the *Spaniard* in 88. recei

Verse 5.
*chap. 4. 9.

Turn away thine eyes, &c.] The ci
above * of the Church assembled, a
ministers; or the members consider
part; as first, knowledge; secondly, if
In both respects the eyes of the Ch
were wonderfull amiable: so that C
speaketh affectionatly to the Church
the manner of Lovers; ravished with
beauty of their Spouses.

Turne away thine eyes, for they have overcome me.]

What worthy Ministers did that first age of the Reformed Churches yeeld? as *Luther, Calvin, Martin Bucer, Cranmer, Hooper, Ridley, Latymer, &c.* What a wonderfull measure of heavenly light did they of a sudden bring into the Church? and that out of the middest of darknesse and Popery; from whence it was, that the knowledge and faith of the Faithfull then was wonderfully enlarged farre beyond the ignorance of former times.

The eyes of the Faithfull in Christs time lay under their lockes, as hindered from cleere sight by many errours; but the eyes of the faithfull, now seeing the truth much more plainly, are not hindered by such lockes hanging over them: How cleere was their faith, that having seene him which was invifible, feared not the fiercenesse of their Kings and Princes, but endured patiently fiery Persecutions, and bloody Massacres?

Thy haire is like a flocke of goats.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep which goe up from washing.

Peter Martyr.

Chap. 4. 1.

Heb. 11. 37.

Ver. 5, 7.

As a piece of Pomgranat are thy temples within thy locks.

Chap. 4.
1,—3.

The estate of common Christians set out by the haire, and of the Ministers set out by the teeth, and of the Church Governours set forth by the piece of Pomgranate, was the same in the Church reformed, as in the Primitive Church, where the description of these parts is used, and here repeated only with this difference: The teeth are not so even cut in Reformed Churches as in Christs time; some of them exceed their Brethren in Authority and Jurisdiction, whereas those were framed to more brotherly love in Christs time; whence the teeth they are said to be even cut, which in these teeth is here left out; yet both the Ministers of higher and lower ranke, were as sheep flocking and consorting together, washed with the Laver of Regeneration, fruitfull and powerfull in their Ministry, and therefore are here described, as a flock of sheep come up from the washing, *whereof every one beareth twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

Ver. 6.

Use 1.

First, wee may here learne to behold a
different

different estate of the Church. Sometimes it is in a Garden; sundry Christians gathered together into beds and knots, and growing up into good order together, delighting and refreshing both God and man with the savour of their sweetnesse: such was, and is the estate of the Church reformed. Sometimes again, the members of the Church scattered abroad in the wilde fields, seeking where they may finde Christ, as in the former Chapter.

The Church is here visible, as in a Garden, in some of their eminent and principall members. If then the Papists aske, where was the Church visible before *Luther*? The answer is, it was visible, not in open Congregations indeed, as it were Gardens; but in sundry members of the Church, as sweet spices and flowers, growing here and there, whom the Popes and their Instruments, like wilde Boares sought to root out, and yet God preserveth them.

Somtime, the Church findeth Christ comfortably in her solemne assemblies, when good Christians are met together to serve him in the simplicity of his Or-

The
Church
how visi-
ble before
Luther.

dinances : sometimes , when they can finde no such Gardens, nor him in any place openly worshipped, yet even then they seeke him here and there where they can finde him.

use 2.

Secondly, the like uses are here to be made of these Gardens, of that Chapter

4. *ver. 14.*

use 3.

Thirdly , to teach us a true description of a Church : It is , as it were, a Garden , an Assembly of many good Christians, or Saints , as it were sweet spices, or flowers, set in order, as it were beds, or knots , amongst whom Christ walketh, they enjoying fellowship with him in his publique Ordinances, and hee with them.

use 4.

Separatist.

Fourthly , to refute the arrogancy, or ignorance of the Separatists , who refuse to keep fellowship with reformed Churches, whom Christ yet keepes fellowship with ; shall man be more pure than his Maker ? or the sonnes of mortal men more holy than the sonnes of God ?

use 5.

Fifthly, to exclude the Popish Synagogues from the number of Christs Gardens ; the Gardens and Churches

of

of Christ, as they have Christ walking in them, so they know it, and professe it, and rejoyce in it.

I am my wel-beloveds, and my wel-beloved is mine.] The Church of Rome disdaines such a song as Hereticall presumption, to say, *I am my wel-beloveds, and he is mine.*

Ver.3.

Sixthly, this doth teach us, that when Churches keepe themselves close to Christ, and to the simplicity of his Ordinances, that they can say, *I am my wel-beloveds, and hee is mine.* Christ will keep himselfe powerfull and gracious amongst them, for their protection and comfort; hee will not faile to shew himselfe theirs, when they faile not to shew themselves his.

use 6.

Seventhly, this may teach us, not to wonder if Christian Assemblies be at first suspected, as *Tirzah* for sedition, separation, &c. It is the lot of Gods Church, which when it groweth up to be better known, will appeare to be as it is, comely as *Jerusalem*.

use 7.

Eighthly, from the description of the Church here by her Members, Eyes, Haire, Teeth, Temples; gather here a-

use 8.

gaine in the same Uses made of the like description, Chap.4. *verse 1,2,3. page* in Uses 2,3,4. there expressed.

Use 9.

Ninthly, observe the Reformed Churches to be the same that the Primitive Church in Christs time, was in sundry principall Members and respects; and therefore the same Members in the same sort described, word for word; yea, such fellowship as the Church of the Jewes had with Christ coming out of Babylon, the same have the Reformed Churches with Christ coming out of Romish Babylon.

Cant 2.
16.ver.3.
Chap.6.

Verse 8.

There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and Virgins without number.

This Verse containes the last part of the description of the estate of the Reformed Churches, which is a comparison of them together amongst themselves; of whom some are,

First, Queenes, and they are threescore.

Secondly, Concubines, and they are fourescore.

Thirdly, Damofels, and they without number.

Secondly,

Secondly, one is eminent above them all unto Christ : First, a Dove, Secondly, undefiled.

Secondly, her selfe one.

Thirdly, her mother, an onely choice one.

Fourthly, her daughter, blessed.

Fifthly, the Queenes and Concubines commended her.

There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and Damofels, or Virgins, without number.

Verſe 8.

Queenes differ from Concubines in foure respects :

First, Queenes, or chiefe Wives are taken into fellowſhip with their royall Huſbands by ſolemne ſtipulation, and with conſent and ſolemne rejoycing of friends : The Concubines are not ſo, as *Bilhah* and *Zilpah*, &c. A man takes ſuch to him rather by right of Dominion, than by fellowſhip of Wedlock.

Gen. 29.
22.

Secondly, Queenes, or chiefe Wives bring with them dowries to their Huſbands*.

* 1 King.

Hence, *Leſbonius* to *Lufitoles*, in Matrimony, would not give his ſiſter* *ſine dote*, leſt he ſhould ſeem to give her *in Concubi-*

9. 16.

Aſſs 3.

ſect 2.

* Without

natum potius quàm in Matrimonium
 Concubines were taken without
 for the most part, as *Hagar*, *Bilhabah*, &c.

Gen. 16.

3.
 Verse 6.

verse 7.

verse 8.

verse 9.

Thirdly, chiefe Wives had the
 of the families in their owne hand
 had government of the house unto
 with their husbands. Hence it
Hagar, though called *Abraham*
 yet is said to be in *Sarahs* hand, w^h
 corrected her: the Angell calleth *Sa*
rabs maid, and shee calleth *Sa*
 Mistresse, as likewise the Angell d

Concubines, though secondary
 yet were but as servants, save one
 were admitted to the fellowship of

Gen. 25.
 5, 6.

Fourthly, chiefe Wives brought
 children, to whom belonged the
 tance; whereas Concubines c
 had, for the most part onely
 gifts given then. That *Dan* and
li, *Gad* and *Asher*, the sonnes of
 and *Zilphah* had Inheritances amo
 brethren, was by extraordinary di
 tion.

Queenes then are such Reformed
 gregations where such proper
 Queenes are found: Christ (i

lookes for no Dowrie from us for his owne use, he needeth nothing of ours, neither have we any thing to give him, but our owne nakednesse, filthinesse, and beggery. Here therefore looke at Christ in the persons of the Ministers, whose Vicegerents they are, and Embassadors also; and in whose name they being married to the Churches, doe beget children to Christ; though Ministers considered in comparison with Christ, they are but as the friends of the Bridegroom, not Bridegrooms themselves. Such Churches then, and Congregations are Queenes whom the Ministers and Congregations do with mutuall free consent chuse either the other; as when the people do give up themselves, first, to the Lord, and then to the Ministers by the will of God. Of this sort are sundry Congregations in England, and very many in the reformed forain Churches: Other Congregations, which have Ministers thrust upon them without their liking and consent, and whom Ministers have to them by some clandestine conveyances, are more like to Concubines.

Againe, such Congregations as
come

Ezek. 16.
5,—6.

1 Cor. 4.
15.

John 3. 29.

2 Corin.
8. 5.

come to their Ministers with a dowry, and comfortable and honorable maintenance, they are like wives; others who bring little or no maintenance with them, are like to Concupiscence; though indeed the former condition is more essentiall to lawfull marriage, without free consent, and mutuall stipulation on both sides; for as sometimes lawfull wives have but poore dowries, and Concubines sometimes bring large maintenance with them: so some Congregations that freely consent to the acceptance of their Ministers can allow them slender maintenance, whereas some others upon whom Ministers thrust themselves are richly endowed: Further, such Congregations as enjoy the possession of the Keyes, they are as Queenes, full wives. The Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, are

First, the one of Knowledge, *Luke 11. 17.*

Secondly, the other of Jurisdiction, *Mat. 18. 18.* and both of them mentioned, *Mat. 16. 19.*

Where then a Congregation enjoys a faithfull Ministry, opening an entrance

into the Kingdome of Heaven to penitent beleevers, and shutting it against impenitent hypocrites and scandalous livers, there the power of the Keyes is not wanting; and if withall they have liberty exercising Jurisdiction, there is their Queen-like, or Wife-like authority more compleat. Of this sort are divers, both English and Foraine Churches, though fundry Germane Churches dispensing the Keyes of Knowledge more corruptly in their Doctrine of the Sacrament, and Predestination, and neglecting the use of Excommunication, doe rather turne to the condition of Concubines.

But such Churches as have no Preachers, or such as have no power in their gifts to open and shut the Kingdome of Heaven, to the conscience and soules of men, they are as Concubines.

Lastly, such Congregations where the people remaine still ignorant in darknesse, and are not brought on to be begotten of God by the lively Word of Regeneration, but continue altogether ignorant, wordly, and profane; they are as Concubines whose children theret not, though God may give them outward blessings.

But

Rev. 3. 4.

But such Congregations where the is lively to the begetting of soules immortall inheritance, they are 1 wives, yea Queenes : Of this sort o glish and Forain Churches have : (God be blessed) though the Chu *Sardis* hath but a few names.

Damofels are without number, &c. mosels, or Virgins in this marriage are of lesse reckoning, as being yet not spoken to in way of marriage. Christ and his Ministers, or coily rely on him. Of this sort there were many Churches at the first reforming of the G to whom for want of Ministers Re were sent ; whence one of the M wished, that every able Minister i have ten Congregations committ his charge, till further provision cou made ; so that such Churches there even ten to one, abundantly many, scarcely heard of Christs knocking their hearts by any conscionable M stery ; yea, and how many be the this day, that either doe want such M sters as doe espouse them to Chrill else doe coily deny their motions, stand out against Christ and their M sters ?

Of Queenes hee reckoneth threescore, of Concubines fourescore. A certaine number put for an uncertaine ; and of Churches, the lesse pure the greater.

Damofels hee reckons without number.

First, partly, because they have been exceeding many of them, and are still too many.

Secondly, partly, because Christ maketh no account of them, as if they were with him *nullius numeri*, not worth the reckoning.

But my Dove, my undefiled is one, &c.]

A Dove is noted,

First, for her chastity ;

Secondly, mildenesse, or innocency : such are those Churches which goe not a whoring after any Superstition, or Idolatry, nor exercise that captivity of Tyranny over their Sister Churches, which the Popish watchmen are taxed for ; that smote and wounded the Members of the Churches for seeking after Christ, and took her vaile from her, which are unspotted, undefiled, either

First, of Romish pollutions, or

Secondly, of worldly courses.

Verse 9.

Mat. 10.
10.

Cant. 5. 7.

Is one; such congregations are
First, few, as one to 60. or 80.

Secondly, at unity, or brother
one with another, as one body,
scattered into many places, as *E*
Scotland, Germany, &c. In all C
dome, some Churches are more
milde, and unspotted than others,
the same countrey; and yet such
few, and though few, yet at entir
as one body.

Verse 9.

*The onely one of her Mother, the
one of her that bare her.*] In the
phrase, the whole is the Mother, t
are the Members. The true Cat
Church of Christ is the Mothe
Reformed Daughters, and these
ter-Churches that are most cha
milde, and undefiled, they are
steemed, and best beloved of the
Catholique Church, as coming
to her in chastity, innocency,
&c.

Verse 9.

*The Daughters saw her, and bless
yea, the Queenes and the Concubins
they praised her.*] These Daughter
ther they be the members of the
ted Churches mentioned in the

verse, either of both, together with these Churches that are as Queenes and Concubines, doe give honourable testimony of these Congregations that are most reformed, and wish them all prosperity, the good things of this life, and a better.

To blesse is more than to praise : Praise is the acknowledging of any good thing in her, but blessing is the acknowledgement,

First, of Divine good things : and

Secondly, those drawing the Churches and themselves therein neerer to God.

Who is shee that looketh forth as the morning, &c.] In these verses, the calling and arising of the Church of the Jewes is described by six Arguments :

First, by the unexpectednesse of her arising, joyned with the admiration of it,

Who is she that looketh forth ? ver. 10.

Secondly, by the place of her arising, the morning or the East Countries.

Thirdly, by the degrees and beauty of her grace.

First, fresh as the morning.

Secondly,

Verse 10.
13.

Secondly, faire as the Moon.

Thirdly, bright and cleer as the

Fourthly, *terrible as an army of men*, ver. 10.

Fourthly, by Christs visitation with the end of it, ver. 11.

Fifthly, by the unexpected which this Church found for her verse 12.

Sixthly, by the earnestnesse calling given her, *Return, Return* times repeated.

Who is this that looketh forth? words expresse the unexpected arising of a new Church; and the Reformed Churches of the Gospel she is a *Shulamite*, alluding to *Salem* an ancient name of *Jerusalem*, the City of the Jewes.

Chap. 3. 6.

This Church then thus arising of the Jewes which we look for; beginning for sudden conversionitudes, shall be admirable to the and others.

Isa. 66. 8.
& 49. 12.

As the morning.] Her arising resembled by the morning,

Rev 16.
12.

First, because this Church shall come from the Easterne Countries.

S

Secondly, her arising shall be like a new Resurrection from the dead.

Thirdly, her arising shall be speedily; as the same phrase intimates.

Faire as the Moone, bright as the Sunne.]

The Moone is faire by beauty communicated to her from the Sun. In the Suns brightnesse is light, heat, refreshing, and all in a glorious manner. The Citizens of that Church shall all at that time, or at least the body of them, have their sins forgiven them by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. They shall enjoy abundant light of heavenly knowledge. They shall excell in purity of holinesse. They shall abound in consolations to the refreshing of themselves and others.

Terrible as an army with Banners.]

Read *Rev. 19. 14, 21.* The Armies of the Jewes shall be terrible to the Turkes and Tartars, and to the false Prophet then driven from Rome by ten Christian Princes, and associating himselfe to the Turke for succour.

I went downe into the Garden of Nuts.]

The Jewish Synagogues, so called, because of that voice of hardnesse and

N blindnesse

Rom. 11.

15.

Isa. 48. 8.

and 60,

19, 20.

Isa. 6. 12,

20. and

24. 23.

Isa. 33. 24

& 60. 21.

Isa. 59. 21.

Zech. 14.

20, 21.

Isa. 66. 10,

11.

Ezek. 38.

& 39. cha.

Rom. 11.
8, 10.
2 Cor. 3.
14:15.

blindnesse drawne over their hearts, as it were a hard Nut-shell over the Ker-nell.

To see the fruits of the vallies.] Val-leyes lying in the shade between two mountaines, bring forth fruit late: so the Jewes are long before they bring forth fruit unto Christ.

To see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.] The Jewes, that for hardnesse of heart, are like a Garden of Nuts; yet when their conversion shall be wrought, will be as Vines and Pomegranates, bring forth sweet and wholesome fruits to the refreshing of God and Man.

Judges 9.
13.

Or ever I was aware, my soule made me like the Charets of Amminadab.] Or set mee upon the Charets of a willing people; not that any thing cometh at unawares to Christ in his owne person; but because to his Ministers, that in his Name shall goe into this Garden of Nuts.

The Jewes shall appeare unexpectedly, prepared to embrace Christs calling: they shall finde the Jewes as Charets of willing people, ready to march with them.

them, whithersoever in Christs Name they shall call; their soules should no sooner desire it, but they should be set in all readinesse; where also is intimated the willing readinesse of a willing people among the Gentiles to convey the Jewes into their Country, with Charets, and Horses, and Dromedaries.

Isa 66. 20.
and 49.
23, 24

Returne, returne, O Shulamite: returne, returne, that wee may looke upon thee: what will wee see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two Armies.

Verse 13.

Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne.] This call so often repeated, doth imply,

Isai. 62. v.
67.

First, the earnestnesse of the Ministers that shall them.

Secondly, the haste that they would have them to make in going through with their conversion.

That wee may looke upon thee, or behold thee.] It is the desire of the Ministers, and of all the faithfull, to behold this glorious Church when shee shall be called.

What will wee see in the Shulamite?] But, as it were, the company of two Armies, or the hoste of ~~Maharishi~~.

Gen 32.
25-28

This is spoken; either because the Jewes shall, presently upon their conversion, marshall and ranke themselves into Armies against *Gog* and *Magog*, ver. 10. where she is said to arise *terrible as an Army with Banners*. Or else taking the word properly; the holy Ghost compareth the Jewes to an hoste of Angels, which *Jacob* saw at *Mahanaim*: as indeed the feeble at that day shall be as valiant as the Angels of God. This Interpretation seemeth to me to be the more likely, because her warlike provision was before mentioned, ver. 10. Or, otherwise, the holy Ghost may allude to the hoste of Israel and Judah, which went to bring up *David* from *Mahanaim* to *Jerusalem*, after the Israelites were brought to see their errours in casting him off for *Absolom*: So shall the Jewes at their conversion assemble for the establishment of the Kingdome and Throne of Christ among them, after they shall be brought to see their foule errours in casting off Christ so unworthily so long a time.

The first Use of this is for discerning a different estate of all Christian Churches and Congregations, and trial of our

owne

Gen. 32.1.
Zech. 12.
8.

2 Sam. 19.
9, 10, 14,
43.

use 1.

owne Parishes. In one of these ranks every Congregation is found, either a Queene, a Concubine, or a Damosell, or a Dove: If we have freely consented to the entertainment of a faithfull Ministry, coming to us in the Name of Christ; if we bring with us to him a sufficient dowry for his maintenance: If the Word of God shall be powerfully dispensed amongst us; and the opening and shutting of the Kingdome of Heaven, and withall the Key of Discipline be not neglected: If our Congregations bring forth many children to God, partakers of the Heavenly Inheritance, then are our Congregations as chiefe Wives, as Queenes to Jesus Christ. But if our Ministers finde not conuagall and free acceptance from us; if we be not willing to provide for them comfortable and honourable maintenance: If the Word be not so dispensed that the people may finde themselves in good or euill estates: If our Congregations bring not forth regenerate Christians to partake of the heavenly Inheritance, then are they but as Concubines in the sight of God:

2 Cor. 5.
20.

If wee have yet no Ministers that w
us, and beseech us to be reconc
to Christ; or if they doe, yet we c
put them off with delayes, or resi
then are wee Damosels, but nei
Queenes nor Concubines. But if
finde all the properties of Queenes
longing unto us, and withall, fin
love and care to keepe our selves cl
to Christ, and innocent to man,
undefiled, and unspotted, both of
World and of Rome, then are we D
to Christ Jesus, choicest children o
true Catholick Church.

use 2.

A second Use is for a discernin
a different estate of all Christian
and triall of our owne estates b
God; if our hearts have neve
been called and knocked at by
lively Word of Gods Ordinance
if wee have coily put off our R
tance to this day, or refuse to he
to Christ, then are we Damosels.
bring forth seed of Righteousne
Christ, by reason we are under th
vernment of such who will requi
and well may command it of us,
are but as Concubines. But if we

ly condescend to receive and embrace Christ into our hearts with entire conjugall affection, and give up our selves to him to bring forth the fruits of his Spirit, and are enabled to governe our selves and families after his will, then are wee Royall Spouses unto Christ Jesus, and keep our selves to Christ chaste, innocent, and undefiled, and endeavour to *cleansse our selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit*; then are wee as Doves unto Jesus Christ.

2 Cor.7.1

A third Use to direct and instruct Ministers and people how to approve themselves and their Congregations in best sort unto Christ. Let not Ministers thrust themselves upon their people against their consents; but let their people freely accept them, and comfortably maintaine them: Let the Ministers be faithfull in dispensing Gods Ordnaunces, and the people obedient, to give up themselves to Christ and his truth, till both grow up to heavenly and holy purity of worship and life; so shall our Congregations be as *Queenes and Doves* to Jesus Christ.

use 3.

A fourth Use may be to encourage

use 4.

men to waies of spotlesse Innocence they are not disgracefull, but blessed the Faithfull, and praised, even of them that are without.

use 5.

Fifthly, to reprove the children of Separation, who reproach the Church instead of blessing or praising them.

use 6.

Sixthly, this may teach us to expect powerfull and glorious calling of Jewes in all the particulars before scribed: say, They be now, as *Gid Fleece*, dry; when the Gentiles are moistened with heavenly dew, they shall gain be moistened when we shall seem in comparison of them. Though I step first into *Jacob's Bed*, and so the comely Church of the Gentiles into fellowship with Christ; yet the Church of the Jewes, as beautifull as *Rachel*, in the end finde fellowship with Christ. The glory of their calling appeareth in the Text, because the holy Ghost scribes her by comparisons, not fetched from earthly flowers, or metals, jewels; but from heavenly lights, Morning Moon, Sun.

It appeareth further in their unexpected and free readinesse to embrace Christ

The power of their calling appears in their earnestnesse and zeale of their Ministry, in breaking the hard shell of their hearts wherewith they were formerly inclosed, *ver. 11.* In stirring them up to fight manfully; and terribly Gods battels against the enemies of the Church, *ver. 13.*

The Lord speedily hasten the coming of this *Shulamite*, that we may behold her, *Amen.*

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THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS.
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 7.

How beautiful are thy feet with shoes. O
Laces Daubier ! the joints of thy thighs are
Jewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning
man.

2 Thy navell is like a round goblet, which wa
net liquor : thy belly is like an heap of wheat,
how with lilies.

3 Thy two breasts are like two young
that are twins.

4 Thy neck is as a tower of Ivory : thine
like the fish-pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of I
rabbim : thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, w
looketh toward Damascus.

5 Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,
the haire of thine head like purple, the King is
in the galleries.

6 How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7 This thy stature is like a palme tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8 I said; I will get up to the palme tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof; now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.

9 And the roose of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved that goeth downe sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleepe to speake.

10 I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards mee,

11 Come, my beloved, let us get forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appeare, and the pomegranats bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.

13 The mandrakes giue a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

THE

THE EXPLANATION.

THis Chapter to the end of the fourth verse of the eighth Chapter, describeth a foure-fold estate of the Jewish Church. When they shall come to be converted unto the Lord: to wit,

First, as it shall be in gathering and growing up, *ver. 1, 5.*

Secondly, as it shall be, growne up to her Stature and Maturity, *ver. 6, 7.*

Thirdly, as it shall be further enlarged by the accessse of the Gentiles, *ver. 8, 10.*

Fourthly, as it shall multiply and stretch it selfe into the Country villages, and throughout the Land of Israel, *vers. 11.*

—*ver. 4. of Chap. 8.*

That in *vers. 11.* the Church inviteth Christ, and with him her selfe to have recourse into the Country villages, is plaine in the words of the former verses, which set forth a three-fold estate of the *Shulamite* converted, is evident by the Repetition of the verses, *verse 3, 7, 8.* and all with some difference; and the breasts are so described, *verse 3.* and set forth an unsettled Ministry, quickly stirring up
and

and down to gather this Church and the scattered Members of it.

This Church then in gathering, is described by ten parts; Feet, Joynts of Thighes, Navell, Belly, Breasts, Necke, Eyes, Nose, Head, Haire.

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes, O Princes Daughter! the joynts of thy thighes are like Jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

Verse 1.

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes, O Princes daughter!] In her feet shod with shooes there is a three-fold beauty; for it implyeth,

First, her returne out of Captivity; as on the contrary, bare feet is a signe of going into Captivity.

Secondly, her challenging and recovery of her lost Inheritance in Israel, *Ruth* 4. ver. 7, 8.

Isai. 20.
1, — 4.
Deut. 25.
ver. 9.

Thirdly, her walking in that peace of conscience which the Gospel prepareth: whereas he that walketh bare-foot, either gathereth a thick brawny skin upon the soles of his feet; or if his feet be more tender, hee pricketh them ever and anon with thornes, or little sharp stones, as scruples: a conscience not furnished with

Eph 6. 15.

true

true peace, either waxeth scabrous, or else scrupulous and all the three things are beautifull; as on the contrary, it is a disturbance and deformity to captivity, to sell and foregoe Inheritance, to walke unquietly comfortably: and if it be beautiful, glorious to returne out of bondage, and to recover the earth; how much more is it with these outward things, to returne out of spirituall captivity, recovery of an everlasting Inheritance as the Jewes shall doe at the conversion?

O Princes Daughter!] So called First, because they are borne the Prince of Princes.

Secondly, the Jewes converted be of much glory and authority: the Kings of the Earth.

The joynts of thy thighes, &c.] This signifies whole bones of the body, for their apt and ready turne their conversion to God, are wrought precious Jewels, the work of the hand of God, the Spiritual

man of all the workes of the Church.

Thy navell, &c. thy belly is like the navell, &c.] The navell and belly are both hidden parts, not conspicuous to them without; and therefore set forth the two Mysteries, or Sacraments of the Church, Baptisme, and the Lords Supper. The Navell, serving for the nourishing of the Infant in the wombe, resembleth Baptisme, nourishing Infants, and new born babes in the womb of the Church.

It wanteth not liquor:

First, of the Spirit of Christ to sanctifie and cleanse us from sin.

The belly: to wit, the Lords Supper, is as an heap of wheat, for store of excellent, and sweet, and fine nourishment, set about with lilies, because onely the faithfull pure Christians shall be admitted to partake in that Sacrament.

The Lords Table shall not be set about with weeds, profane and scandalous sinners, but with *Lilies*, worthy Communicants.

Thy two breasts (the Teachers of that Church) *are like two young Roes:* For their agility, skipping up and down to suckle the converts; implying that the first Mi-

nistry

nistry of the Jewes, at the conversion of that people shall rather be as the Evangelists, bound to no certain place, than as Pastors fixed to any settled Congregation, which yet outwardly they shall be.

That are twins.]

First, for their likeness in disposition.

Secondly, brotherly equality.

Verse 4.

Thy necke is as a tower of Ivory: thine eyes like the fish-pooles in Heshbon; by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

Chap. 4.
verse 4.

Thy necke is as a tower of Ivory.] The neck (as above) is the faith of the Church, joyning Christ and his Church together, as the neck doth the head and body.

As a tower, for strength; *of Ivory,* for preciousness, for which faith is commended.

1 Pet. 1. 7.
2 Pet. 1. 1.

Thine eyes are like the fish-pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim.] For the abundance of water, meaning teachers, that they shall yeeld even teares of Repentance at their conversion; partly, for
the

the great wrong they had done our Saviour; partly, to consider the unspeakable and undeserved kindnesse of God towards them.

Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.] There was a double house of the Forrest of *Lebanon*, the one in Jerusalem, built by *Solomon*, so called by way of resemblance: in which hee put his golden shields, whence *Shishak* taking them, is said to take them out of Jerusalem: of this House speaketh *Isaiah*, Chap. 22. ver. 8.

There was another House built in the Forrest of *Lebanon*, as appeareth by this place, which is said to look toward *Damascus*, to distinguish it from the other which is in Jerusalem.

Lebanon it selfe stood in the utmost Confines of Israel, Northwards towards Syria: and therefore this House built in *Lebanon* is said to look toward *Damascus*, the chiefe City of Syria. Now *Lebanon* being full of all manner of sweet and fragrant trees, and shrubs, and spices; the tower built in *Lebanon* must needs be compassed with the sweet smelling odours, to the great refreshing and de-

Zech. 12.
10.
Jerem. 3.
8, — 9. &
50. 4.

1 King. 7.
2. & 10.
17.
1 King. 14.
25, — 26.

Lebanon how situated.

light of such as should lodge in it.

Cor. 2.
5.

Hence the nose of this pure Church is compared to this tower; because they that dwell in this Church shall be wonderfully refreshed with the sweet odours of the Ministry, which is the sweet favour of life unto life: as also with the savoury conference of good Christians, and their faithfull and godly conversation.

Verse 5.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thine head like purple; the King is held in the galleries.

Isa. 339.
and 35. 2.
1 Sam. 15.
ver. 17.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel.] Carmel excelled for fruit, and fulnesse in feeding cattell, and therefore is reckoned with Lebanon, and Sharon, and Bashan, famous for fertility.

The head of the Church under Christ is the Civill Magistrate. The meaning then is, that the Magistrate of this Church shall yeeld store of sound and sweet nourishment to the people, by giving a maintaining free passage to each holy Commandance of God, and also by wholesome Lawes; and lastly, by good example godly life.

The haire of thy head like purple.]

haire; whether it be the common Christians of the Church that hang upon Christ, or the Officers or Servants that hang upon the Magistrates of that Church, they are like purple.

First, not onely died in crimson blood of Christ.

Isa 33.24.
and 63. 1.

Secondly, but also of a royall hue, as purple is a princely dye; all of them as Princes.

Cant 7.1.
Zech. 12.
ver.8.
Revel. 16.
12.

The Officers and Exacters shall be Peace and Righteousnesse.

Isa. 60 17.
and 18.

These Officers shall not basely sharke for bribes, nor exact for fees, nor oppresse for filthy lucre, nor picke holes in mens estates to trouble the people and enrich themselves; but like purple cloathed Princes, be like their Ministers, and honour both their Ministers and themselves with Peace and Righteousnesse.

The King is held in the Rasters.] For so the word is turned before, where the Rasters were understood partly of the Temple: *Held*, is alwaies (to my remembrance) used for holding by constraint, bound as a Prisoner. The meaning may be then, That the King, or chiefe Magistrate is bound to be present

Cant 1.
17.

Ezek. 46.
10.

Psal. 149.
6, 8, & 9. v.
Isa. 49. 22.

Use 1.

at the Ordinances of God in the Temple. The Prince is commanded to goe in with them, when they goe out, hee shall goe out with them together; hee shall come in with the first, and go out with the last: Or what if it imply that their greatest Magistrates shall submit themselves to be bound with the Censures of the Church, according to that where the Psalmist telleth of binding of Kings with the Ordinances of God in the Church. And *Isaiah* foretelleth that Kings and Queenes shall bow downe their faces towards the earth unto the Church, and licke the dust of their feet; both their Interpretations stand well together.

First, this doth shew us how to come and appeare beautifull in the eyes of the Lord Jesus: which is when we turne our feet from the estate and wayes, and bondage of sinne and Satan, and come out of the captivity into the liberty of his children, when we claime our Inheritance of the Kingdome of heaven, seeking after it above all earthly blessings, and walking towards it; when we walke confidently in a Christian course, then Christ admitteth

reth our beauty. How beautifull are thy
 goings with shooes, *O Princes Daughter!*
 Yea, Christ then esteemeth us as Princes
 children: what matter then if foolish men
 account us Peasants, and our going with
 shooes as straight in the instep? But wee
 stand not, nor fall not to their judgements,
 but to his who shall judge us to eternall
 happinesse, or misery at the last day. His
 word must not stand when heaven and
 earth shall fall: If he account us vessels of
 honour, wee are so indeed, who is it that
 dishonoureth us? If men should cast a
 vessell of gold or silver into the mire, and
 trample upon it, yet the vessell is still a
 vessell of honour, good, and rich, and
 precious; the mire may easily be washed
 off from such vessels. Be not discouraged
 then from Christian courses by foolish
 feares of reproach: The truth is, if wee
 goe on in sinne, Christ esteemeth of us
 as base peasants, as ugly and abominable
 in his sight, naked, bare, deformed, and
 defiled; yea, he esteemeth our goings as
 going bare-foot, which either, first, bravneth
 our feet with a thick skin, that there-
 by we grow insensible and feelee nothing:
 or secondly, pricketh us with unne-

Mar. 5. 18.

2 Tim. 2.
ver. 21.

cessary scruples and feares.

use 2.

Secondly, we may from hence observe to whom the praise of the conversion of the forwardest Christians is due; to wit, to the hands of a cunning workman, the God of power and peace. We might be also called as often to retutne; as the *Shulamite* in the last verse of the former Chapter: and yet unlesse this cunning workman put the bones of our thighes into joynt, we shall not returne to him.

use 3.

Further, see here the use of Baptisme, even to infants. The Anabaptists object, that Infants can receive no benefit by it, because they yet receive no understanding, no benefit by the Word: As if Infants cannot receive nourishment by the Navell, though they can neither take, nor chew, nor sucke meat with hand or mouth: Baptisme is the Navell by which Infants are nourished in the Church.

use 4.

Fourthly, from this Navell, never wanting liquor; observe, there doth never want just matter of instruction and comfort to be fetched from our Baptisme against all temptations. Doth Satan detainee thee from obeying thine effectuall calling: Remember in Baptisme from

Comfort
in Ba-
ptisme.

thine

thine Infancy thou wast admitted into the family of Christ; doth hee trouble thee with feares and doubts, that thy finnes are not pardoned? Behold thy Baptisme is full of liquor of Christs blood, to justifie thee from all thy finnes: Doth Satan tempt thee to defile thy selfe with any sin? Behold thou art washed solemnly in Baptisme from all sinne, and wilt thou defile thy selfe against thy Baptisme?

Fifthly, in the Lords Supper, see what plenty of excellent, sound, and sweet nourishment is offered to us, even an heap of wheat: *Christs flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* There is al-sufficient nourishment for an hungry soule; this serveth to quicken our appetite to this heavenly banquet.

Sixthly, observe what manner of persons should be admitted to the Lords Table, and how wee should prepare our selves thereto. This heap of wheat is not to be set about with stinking weeds, but with faire lilies: Cleanse our selves then from all scandalous finnes, yea, and from all secret finnes, to our best endeavours, so shall wee be set about

use 5.

John 6.
55.

use 6.

this heape of wheat, the Lords T

Seventhly, note that Ministers, like Roes, skipping up and down to g and suckle the children of the Church fitter for a Church in gathering, convenient in a Church constituted then the breasts hang in their place clusters of Grapes upon the branch the Vine, *v. 7, 8*. But they must be b giving suck, not dry nurses; that is duty in every estate of the Church if their people be grown up in Ch fitnesse for strong meat, then they full in a stronger liquor than milke, a sters of Grapes, full of wines.

Eightly, see the beauty and con dation of three cardinall graces :

First, Faith, to be

First, strong.

Secondly, precious, applying th cious promises, and making us rich them.

Secondly, Repentance to abou brokennesse of spirit through godl row, melting into abundance of tear other affections futable thereto.

Thirdly, Obedience, to be

First, fragrant.

Secondly, and that with all manner of sweet fruits and good, that all that converse with us may smell a sweet favour from our conversation.

Ninthly, marke here a lesson for Magistrates, to be as *Carmell*, yeelding some sweet and plentiful nourishment to the people.

use 9.

First, by procuring free passage to Gods Ordinances, whence *Jehasophat's* Nobles are said to teach.

1 Chr. 17.
& 7-9.

Secondly, by making wholesome Lawes.

Thirdly, by giving good example of life, to have no Officers hanging about them of base demeanour, exacters, promoters, contentious persons, but such as may execute it themselves and their Ministers, and for publick Ordinances of Gods worship; it is no disparagement to Magistrates to behave themselves reverently in them, and to submit themselves unto them as unto Christ.

Tenthly, from this compleat description of the beauty of the Church in all her parts; observe,

use 10.

First, that the Church was never so compleatly beautifull in all her parts, as
it

1 Cor. 11.
20.

it shall be when the Jewes are called. The Apostolique Primitive Church, though all faire, yet wanted this head-like *Carmel*, a Christian Magistrate, yea and some purity of the Sacrament.

Secondly, in that he beginneth this description from the feet, and so ascendeth to the head in order : It may seeme the calling of the Jewes shall begin at first rather with some of the lowest people and so ascend higher and higher to more eminent persons.

Thirdly, in that the Church neither here (where so many of her members are set forth) nor in all this Song is described, by the beauty of her hands, or fingers, wee must not gather that therefore this Church will be barren of good works, God forbid, but rather conceive Christ concealeth the mention of her hands ; to wit, her workes, partly,

First, because the Harlot of *Rome* so delighteth so much to boast of her hands of her workes, which indeed shee wants : Christ had rather his Church should abound in good workes in silence, than boast of them, especially when they are wanting.

Secondly.

Secondly, because it is he alone (and not wee) *that worketh all our workes for us.*

Cantic. 7. vers. 6. — vers. 4. of 8. Chap. How faire, &c.

Isa. 26. 12.
Hos. 14. 8.
Joh. 15. 5.

In these verses the holy Ghost goes on to describe the second estate of the Jewes Church, as is spoken above, *Chap. 7. ver. 1. in ver. 6, 7. as grown up to her full stature and maturity.*

For first, beauty is not observed till full growth; now here her beauty is admired, *verse 6.*

Secondly, her stature is expressly mentioned to be a Palm-tree, *ver. 7.*

Thirdly, her breasts are here mentioned againe, *ver. 7.* shew that he speaketh not of the same estate of the Church as afore. Besides, the breasts yeelding wine in stead of milke, it is a signe the Church shall then be grown to more maturity and firmesse to be fed with stronger meat.

The Church of the Jewes then come to her fuller growth is here described,

First, by her beauty, which is admirable, *How faire!* and joyned with pleasure, *How pleasant art thou!* especially for publick worship so described, *ver. 6.*

Secondly,

Secondly, by her stature, resembled a palme-tree, *ver. 7.*

Thirdly, her breasts resembled clusters of Grapes, *ver. 7.*

The third estate of this Church shall be further enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles, is described, *ver. 8.*, that

First, by Christs climbing this tree, and taking hold of the boughes, *verse 8.*

Secondly, by the rich supply of richness from her breasts, *ver. 8.*

Thirdly, by the smell of her nose, resembled to Apples, *ver. 8.*

Fourthly, by the power of her Urine, *ver. 9.*

Fifthly, by her familiar fellowship with Christ, *ver. 10.*

The fourth estate of this Church shall multiply, and stretch it selfe into Country villages, is described, *verse 11.* to the fourth of the next Chapter that

First, by the occasion of this crease, the Churches invitement of Christ to visit the Country villages, *II, 12.*

Secondly, by the affectionate service of this Church to Christ, *Chapter 8. ver. 1,2.*

Thirdly, by Christs affectionate embracing of her, *ver. 3.*

Fourthly, by the Churches desire for the continuance of this estate without interruption, *ver. 4.*

How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights !

How faire !] The fairenesse and beauty of the Church implyeth sutablely to what is found in the naturall beauty of the body.

First, a compleat integrity of all the Members of this Church ; where any Member is wanting, there is deformity, beauty is blemished. This Church shall want then no Ordinances of God, nor any such Members to whom the dispensation of each Ordinance belongeth.

Secondly, a fit proportion of all the Members of the Church one to another ; no swellings, no convulsions.

Thirdly, a good colour in the outward face of things, all carried decently, and in order : *How faire !* It implyeth admirable beauty in all these respects.

How

How pleasant for delights !] This word implyeth a ready willingnesse of this Church to the publique worship of God, which is here called delights; as being the marriage bed wherein Christ most familiarly solaceth himselfe with his Church.

Psal. 110.
3.

This ready willingnesse of this Church was fore-told, and the willingnesse of this people to any service of his is pleasant to him.

2 Cor. 9.
7.

O love !] As if the Church were so lovely, that it were even love it selfe.

The five former verses described the Church in her severall Members apart. This verse considereth the whole body met together in publick duties.

Verse 7.

This thy stature is like to a palme-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

This thy stature is like to a Palme-tree.]

This tree is eminent,

First, for her straightnesse.

Secondly, for her talenesse.

Jer. 17.8.

Thirdly, for her perpetuall greennesse and fruitfulnessse, as that

Fourthly, for her thriving under weight pressing it down.

Fifthly, for her easinesse to be climbed.

bed, having many boughes, whereon to stay hands and feet : So shall the Church be eminent for uprightnesse therein, for growing up even against 'all oppositions of Gog and Magog, for ready entertaining of all the faithfull that shall come to her.

Plin. l. 13. cap. 4.

Thy breasts are like the clusters of the wine-grapes.] Their Ministers such like in four respects :

First, not few, as afore, two young Roes, but many, as clusters.

Secondly, not stirring up and down, as Roes, from place to place, but hanging in their places.

Thirdly, full of strong liquor of sound Doctrine.

Fourthly, requiring some pressure in urging (though little) before they empty themselves, but upon easie pressure doing it plentifully.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof : now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the Vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.

Ver. 8.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof.]

Christ speakes of himselfe to imply the readinesse

readinesse of his members to resorte flock to this Church of the Jewes, what Christs members doe by the guidance of his Spirit, hee accounteth owne action. This forwardnesse of Gentiles to ascend and resort to Jerusalem, is elsewhere fore-told more fully *.

* Zech.8.

33.

Isai.60.

8.11.

Now also thy breasts as the cluster vine.] And that is notwithstanding plenteous access of the Gentiles Church. Here shall be no defect of Masters to teach and feed them all; but shall be still a large supply of store, and plentiful Teachers, as clusters of Grapes to refresh them all.

And the smell of thy nose like an olive. Notwithstanding this plenteous access of the Gentiles, the life of common Christians intainted with heathenish and carnalish unsavory pollutions; yet the Church her self, and they that live in it shall have a fragrant savour of the good conviction of the people.

The smell of thy nose.] Not which nose yeeldeth, but which is yeelded to the nose, to thy favoury discerning shall be sweet and comfortable, as that of apples.

Be

Before, when this Church consisted of her owne people, her smell was as that of *Lebanon*, ver. 4. and now by the accessse of the Gentiles it shall not be corrupt. Indeed when the Israelites came out of Egypt, the mingled of the Gentiles with them, drew them away to murmuring and lusting; for this compare *Exodus* 12. 38. with *Numb.* 11. 4. But no such contagion shall accrue to this Church by the mingling of the Gentiles with them.

And the roose of thy mouth like the best wines, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

Verse 9.

And the roose of thy mouth like the best wines. Hebr. *Like good wine, going to my beloved most straightly and rightly.* That is, the Doctrine of the Church shall be as ever any most sweet and powerfull, and comfortable, and generous wine; it shall ever goe, or tend directly to Christ, alwaies aiming at the preaching of him.

To goe rightly, or straightly, implyeth the strength and generousnesse of wine, when it sparkleth upward in the cup, as *Proverb.* 23. 31. which here expresseth the lively vigour of the Churches Doctrine,

A. 2. 11,
13.

Verse 10.

in her preaching of Christ, *causing of those that are asleep to speak*. Surely be the sweet and powerfull efficacy of the Doctrine of the Church then, to cause the sleepey and drowsie people whether amongst us Gentiles, or amongst the Jewes, to open their mouths and speak plentifully to Gods praise. The Apostles spake (the wonderful work of God) in strange tongues, some people thought them to be full of wine, but they were deceived, and were willing so to account of them in mockery. But these people shall be full of wine of the Spirit and Word of God, and open their mouthes to speak as the Apostles did, the wonderfull workes of God.

I am my beloveds, and his desire is me.

This profession of the Church she is her beloveds, argueth,

First, her familiar fellowship with Christ.

Secondly, her faith, or confidence in him, her interest in him, or his in her.

Thirdly, her open profession of the same.

That his desire is towards her, :

the strength of his affection toward her, and it is the same word used *, which there implyeth two things :

Gen. 3. 16.
& 4. 7.

First, the strength of their affection to their husband, and their elder brother.

Secondly, the subordination and dependance thereof upon their will : the former is here also meant, the latter doth not stand with the Sovereignty and Headship of Christ over his Church : Unlesse thus farre, to intimate Christs tender regard of the will and desire of his Church ; as hee would be as unwilling to deny them, as loving husbands be to deny their wives any thing.

Ephes. 5.
23, 24.

Come my beloved, let us goe forth into the field : let us lodge in the villages.

Verse 11.

In these words, the Church inviteth Christ to visit the Country villages about her, implying,

First, her prayers to Christ, that with her he might lodge there, plant and set Churches there.

Secondly, her care to take and observe all opportunities to advance such a work.

Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender

Ver. 12.

228 *The faithfull shew their affection to Christ.*

Verse 12.

*grape appeare, and the pomegranats bee
there will I give thee my loves.*

*Let us get up early to the vineyards
see if the vine flourish.]* Meaning if an opportunity should offer it selfe, to plaign amongst them; then Christ might be forward to further same.

Thirdly, her promise to Christ to ploy her best endeavours to such vice.

Joh. 21.
15.

There will I give thee my loves. love of the Church to Christ is easily seen in feeding his Lambes and so. She therefore offereth to Christ first of her dearest and best affections forward such a work.

Fourthly, her discerning of some beginning of such a work.

Verse 13.

The Mandrakes give a smell, and our gates are all manner of pleasant fruit and old, which I have laid up for the beloved.

Gen. 30.
14.

The Mandrakes give a smell.] Was a Country field herb, yet amiable, argueth some fruits to be gathered in Country.

And at our gates are all manner of

fruits, new and old.] And therefore, out of the abundance of her owne store, she can supply the Country with all fit helps, to her further gathering and establishment.

Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.] She professeth her desire to employ all her store to Christs advantage, and therefore abounding with Ministers, and other fit Officers for gathering and establishing the Country Churches about her, she expresseth her readinesse to bring them out to his service and use, as if they were some good household provision, laid up by her for such a use. The accessse of the whole Land of Israel to the City is profitable. The Land shall be called *Ben-lah*, as well as the City *Hephzibah*, ver. 10. A Causey is cast up for a mutuall recourse of Country to City.

Isai. 62. 4.

THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 8.

O That thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother ! when I should finde thee out, I would kisse thee , yet I should not be despised.

2 I would lead thee , and bring thee into my mothers house , who would instruct me : I would cause thee to drinke of spiced wine , of the jayce of my pomegranate.

3 His left hand should be under my head , and his right hand should embrace me.

4 I charge you , O daughters of Jerusalem, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love untill bee please.

5 (*Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved ?*) I raised thee up under the apple tree : there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

6 Set me as a seale upon thy heart, as a seale upon thine arme : for love is as strong as death, jealousy is cruell as the grave : the coales thereof are coales of fire, which hath a most vebement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it : if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts, what shall we doe for our sister, in the day when she shall be spoken for ?

9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver : and if she be a doore, we will inclose her with boards of Cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers : then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baul-Hamon, he let out the vineyard unto Keepers : every one for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

12 My vineyard which is mine, is before me : thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it.

14 Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountaine of spices.

THE EXPLANATION.

THe Church of the Jewes, both in City and Country thus gathered, doe here expresse her ardent affection to Christ, and due respect of him, which the old Synagogue shewed towards her whilest he was conversant amongst them in the flesh. (Since saith she) *O that thou wert as my brother, &c.* Christ was made our brother by taking our Nature upon him at his Incarnation, and then he sucked the breasts of the Church, attending to the Ministry of *John*, and other Jewish Teachers: she therefore to shew her affection, desireth that he were now amongst them conversant in their streets againe in bodily presence, she would not doe then as the old Synagogue did, be ashamed of him, or come to him by night; but shee would kisse him, and embrace him in the open streets, and yet no man should then despise her for her so doing, as they did; but every one should encourage her in her obsequiousnesse to him: She would not reject him, and thrust him out of the Synagogue, as her old Ancestors had done;

John 4.
48, 49.

Luke 4.
28, 29.

done; but if she found him without, shee would lead him, and invite him into their Synagogue, or Temple, there to instruct her, and teach her the will of her father; she would not give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, as her forefathers had done; but she would cause him to drinke of the best delicate spiced wine, and the juice of her Pomegranate.

Mat. 27.
34.

His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

Verse 3.

The left hand of Christ is the Christian Magistrate, which shall in those daies support and advance the Church, and hold up her head.

His right hand is the faithfull Ministers, which shall speake comfortable things to her heart, and so embrace her, *Isai. 62.* for this also see, * *I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, that you stirre not up, nor awake my love untill he please.*

Ezek. 33.
23, 24, 25.
Dan 7. 27.

* Cant. 2.
6.

The Church enjoying these great mercies and blessings from Christ, chargeth all her daughters, members, to walk so thankfully, and fruitfully towards God, and lovingly and helpfully one towards another, and so circumspectly, and inoffensively to them which are without, that

Chap. 2.
verse 7.
Chap. 3.
verse 5.

Isai. 65.
25.

Use 1.

Isai. 66.
11, 12.
Use 2.

no occasion be given of their alteration of their happy estate. When the Church gave this charge before, it was in regard of the Roes and Hindes of the field; fearfull Christians coming on towards Religion, willing to flock, and feed, and converse with the sheep, yet ready to start and flee away upon any feare of danger of persecution; but now no regard is had of these fearefull ones; for they that shall then remaine fearefull, when the Church shall enjoy so great light and safety, they shall be quite excluded from conversing with the Church.

For use, we may here learn,

First, since the Church of the Jewes shall attaine to so great beauty, it ought to kindle our desire to pray earnestly for their conversion, that we may behold the admirable fairenesse thereof, and be delighted with her consolations.

Secondly, this doth teach us how to approve our selves pleasant and faire in Christs eyes, even by keeping his Ordinances in integrity, and simplicity, and by a willing readinesse to frequent the same.

Christ may see all the world, as he did
when

when Satan * shewed it to him, and yet not admire it, yea, condemne it for vanity, as it is *; but a well ordered Church, and ready, he admireth.

Thirdly, here learn the more straight and sincere, the more patient and meek, the more faithfull, the more fruitfull in all holy obedience, &c. the more doe we attaine to a Palm-tree, like full stature of Christianity.

Fourthly, it may learne and direct Ministers to apply themselves to the estate of their people: If they be babes in Christ, to be as breasts of milke to suckle them: If they be grown to ripe yeares, to be as clusters of grapes to refresh them with stronger liquor, be ready to poure out sweet and comfortable liquor; but see some good calling to pressing you to it, let all your Doctrine direct to Christ, and dispense it with such powerfull efficacy of the Spirit, that the drowsie sluggard may be raised up to some fruitfulness, and more holy walking towards God.

Fifthly, this may teach townes well provided for, to lend their best care and help for the edifying and calling home of

Country

*Mat.4.8,

9.

Luk.4.5,6

*Eccl.1.2,

14. & 2.

11, 15, 17,

19, 22, 26.

use 3.

use 4.

use 5. 3

Country villages : Grudge not then at their ready resort to the gate of your Assemblies, but rather encourage them, that they may be partakers with them.

use 6.

Sixthly, this lets us see, that time shall come when forward profession shall be no disgrace; yea, men shall kisse Christ openly, and shall not be despised.

use 7.

Seventhly, the malignity of our Ancestors against Christ and his Gospel, must provoke us to more embracing of him, and more subjection to him.

use 8.

Eighthly, we may here see that a faithfull Ministry, and godly Magistracy is a pledge of Christs tender love, and kinde embracing of the Church.

use 9.

Ninthly, we are hence to take notice, that when a Church enjoyeth many gracious and sweet blessings from Christ, it is good for her to see it and acknowledge it, and to be carefull that all her Members may so walk, as their happinesse be not interrupted. In the fourth verse the charge runneth thus, *That yee stirre not up, &c.* But in the Hebr. *Why should you stirre up, &c.* As who should say, when all things are throughly and fully reformed and settled: Why should you goe about any Innovation?

Innovation? This manner of charge was never uttered before, *Cant. 2. ver. 7.* to the end.

(Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved?) I raised thee up under the apple-tree: there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse?] In these words the holy Ghost setteth out the calling and estate of two other Churches after the calling of the Jewes:

First, the one arising out of the Wildernesse, *ver. 5, 7.*

Secondly, the other a little sister, *ver. 8, 10.* together with the estate of the whole Church, as it shall then stand, from that time to the end of the world, *verse 11, 14.*

This Church coming up from the Wildernesse is described,

First, by the unexpectednesse of her arising, together with the admiration of the Jewish Churches there, *ver. 5.* *Who is this that cometh up out of the Wildernesse?*

Secondly, by the place of her arising, the Wildernesse.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, by her familiar fell with Christ, joyned with her con on him, *leaning upon her beloved.*

Fourthly, by the meanes of the ring and raising of this Church, *thee up under an apple-tree, &c. ver.*

Fifthly, by her earnest desire deep affection to her, and continuance of her, *Set me as a seal thine heart, as a seal upon thine arme* which petition of hers is urged by true, taken from the strength and of her affection to him, which flourisheth.

First, by comparing her affection equal to three things most strong,

First, Death.

Secondly, to the Grave.

Thirdly, to vehement flames of verse 6.

Secondly, by comparing it to three things as lesse than her affection, that they be also of great force,

First, to many waters, which cannot quench her affection of love.

Secondly, to the whole substance of any mans house, which would be damned if it were offered to withdraw from Christ, ver. 7.

The calling and estate of the other Church, the little sister, is described by three passages,

First, by the consultation of the elder Sisters; to wit, of the Jewish Churches, and of that Church coming up out of the Wildernesse, what they shall doe for her when she shall be spoken of, *ver. 8.*

Secondly, by a resolution what they shall do for her, sutable to what her condition (as they shall finde her) shall require, *ver. 9.*

Thirdly, a satisfaction given by this little sister, to the elder, how her estate standeth, together with the cause thereof, Gods favour, that they may the better know what courses to take for her, *v. 10.*

The estate of the whole Church, as it shall stand after the conversion of the Jewes, and of those other Churches is set forth;

First, from Christs care for them, expressed,

First, in his watchfulnesse over them in his owne person, which he amplifies by the lesse care which *Solomon* had of his vineyard, committing the keeping of it to others, *ver. 11, 12.*

Secondly,

Secondly, in his charge to the Church, that he may heare her companions harkning unto her, *ver. 13.*

Secondly, by the Churches prayer unto Christ, that hee may hasten the translating of them into heaven in the end of the world, *verse 14.*

Who is this that cometh, &c.] Who these Churches should be that remaine to be called after the conversion of the Jewes and Gentiles, wee cannot conceive any more fitly than the Churches of *Assyria*; secondly, of *Egypt*, of which wee read *Isa. 19. 23, 25.* When a Church shall be elected among the Jewes, signified by *Ezekiels* goodly Temple, the water of Gods Spirit shall flow from thence Eastward, goe downe into the Desert, and from thence spread themselves farre and neere.

Ezek. 47.
1, 9.

This Desert, or Wildernesse Eastward from *Judah*, is the wildernesse of *Arabia*, whither Spirituall graces shall be conveyed by some coming from *Jerusalem*, and from thence they shall be further carried into the East Countries, to the gathering, and conversion of the *Assyrians* and others: Whence it is; that Church arising from

from the Wildernesse of *Arabia*, is said to leane upon her beloved in an *Arabian* word; as when the holy Ghost was to speak of the *Babylonian* Captivity (or Winter, being past, he useth the *Babylonian* or *Caldean* word. So then, when the Churches of *Judea* shall see such a goodly Church spring from some small helpe, out of the Wildernesse of *Arabia*, beyond their expectation; they shall say of her, *Who is this that cometh out of the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved?* trusting by faith on him, and thereby attaining and enjoying fellowship with him: for to leane is put as an act of faith or trusting*, and the gesture implyeth familiar love*.

I raised thee under an apple-tree.] Christ, or the Church of the Jewes by his power raised up his Church by the meanes of some inferiour Magistrate, resembled here by an Apple-tree, as before*. For though hee was not so high and mighty as the Cedars of *Lebanon*, or the Oakes of *Balsan*; yet eminent hee was, and his shadow good, and his fruit cordiall and comfortable.

And the meanes of the gathering of this Church, being at first but an inferi-

Cant. 2. 11.

* Pro. 3. 5.

* John 13.

23. & 20.

20.

* Cant. 3.

ver. 3.

our Magistrate ; the Church had more need and use of faith to leane upon her beloved, when soveraigne authority did not countenance the work.

There thy mother brought thee forth.] To wit, the Mother-Church of the Jewes, or the Catholique, which is the Mother of us all.

Gal. 4. 26.
Verse 6.

Set me as a scale upon thy heart, as a scale upon thine arme, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruell as the grave : the coales thereof are coales of fire which hath a most vehement flame.

Set me as a scale upon thine heart, as a scale upon thine arme.] That is, let me be deep engraven as a scale is, into thine heart, or affection, and as a scale on thine arme, let me be continually in thy sight and remembrance. And because the heart is the seat of the will, and the arme of strength, therefore hee desireth his deep affection and mighty strength and power alwaies to be present with her for her comfort and peace.

For love is strong as death.] Death sheweth his strength,

First, in subduing all sorts of people high and low, young and old.

Secondly,

Secondly, accepting no compassion, nor yeelding to any opposition, but going through with his work; such strength of love shall this Church shew to Christ; subduing all before her to the obedience of Christ, and not suffering any impediment to detain her from him.

Jealousie is as swell as the grave.] Jealousie is a mixt affection of zeale or fervent love, and carries at any contrivance, a rage with wrath against them: So fervent then shall the zealous love of this Church be to Christ, that she may not endure any such things as shall steal away the peoples hearts from Christ, or alienate or lessen his affection to her, but as the grave,

First, she shall devoure all such things, and bury them out of sight; And

Secondly, there hold them under for ever.

The coales thereof are coales of fire, which have a most vehement flame.] The ardency of this love shall as coales of fire,

First, enflame her in all her services to Christ.

Secondly, burne up as stubble all impediments.

First, all inward green lusts.

Secondly, outward entanglements.

(*Vehement flame*) Hebr. Flames of God, that is, excellent or extraordinary; for in Scripture phrase, the things of God are transcendently excellent, as the Harpes of God *, the Trees of God *.

*Rev. 15. 2
Psal. 1. 3.

Flames of God, divine and vehement; and indeed this vehement love being kindled by Gods heavenly Spirit, cannot be quenched with earthly things.

Verse 7.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drowne it: If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

That is, neither adversities, though never so many, or deep, or strong, as many waters and floods, shall withdraw this love from Christ; nor all the treasures, and pleasures, and credit, which the substance of any mans house might procure us, shall be of any reckoning in comparison of Christ, to withhold our hearts from him.

Verse 8.

We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts, what shall we do for our sister, in the day when she shall spoken for.

We have a little sister, &c.] The Church of Judea and Assyria hearing of some good people

people growing up & coming on in *Egypt*, they are solicitous what course to take for them for their growth and establishment.

A little sister.] In comparison of the Jewes or Assyrians, for but *five Cities in the Land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and one of them shall be called the City of destruction.*

Isa. 19. 18.

And she hath no breasts.] No Ministers to give to them the sincere milk of the Word or the meanes of consolation in their oppressions and distresses.

1 Pct. 2. 2.

Isa. 9. 20.

In the day when shee shall be spoken for.] When the fulnesse of time shall come, that she shall grow up to such a multitude of Professors, as may be fit to have a settled Church established amongst them; for there is a company grown up to be a fit Spouse for Christ. When there are so many good Christians as may constitute a well ordered Church.

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a doore, we will enclose her with boards of Cedar.

Verse 9.

If she be a wall, we will build.] That is, if she have a Christian Magistracy; for the Magistrate is a wall.

First, high, to keep out invasions of enemies;

enemies, even so doth he keep our forain evils from breaking in upon his people.

Secondly, close to keep in his people within bounds from breaking out into disorder.

Thirdly, firme, whereon to reare (if occasion be) a *silver Palace*, whereon to lay the frame of a good motion, or course to be taken for publick good.

Fourthly, a wall of partition, to divide between right and wrong, to give every man his owne.

Wee will build upon her a silver palace.]
Wee will make her garment honourable and wealthy.

If she be a doore.] That is, if she have faithfull Ministers, which as a door open the way to Christ, that the people may goe in and out, and find pasture in him:

Wee will inclose her with boards of Cedar.]

Cedar is a timber that will neither rot, nor breed worms, and so will endure alwaies, whence it was that the Heathen made their *Simulachra deorum*, Images of their gods of this wood, to make them seeme eternall. These Sister-Churches then promise, that if their little Sister of *Egypt* have any faithfull Ministers, they

will

will provide for their safety and peace, that they be not discouragèd, nor disturbed in their function.

I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

Verse 10.

The little sister of Egypt resolveth her sisters, that she wants neither Christian Magistrates, nor faithfull Ministers; so full of wholesome Doctrine, as that her breasts swell like towers; which yet shee acknowledgeth to be a singular mercy and favour of Christ, and ascribeth all her store to his praise: *Then was I as one that found favour in his eyes.*

Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-Hamon: A place so fruitfull, that for excellency it was called the Lord of a multitude, or the owner of great encrease. Hee let out the vineyard to keepers, who paid him a great rent, even thousands for the fruit of it, and yet had a good portion, certaine hundreds for their own paines.

Verse 11.

My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keepe the fruit thereof, two hundred.

Verse 12.

To wit, I let not out my vineyard to

Q. 4

others.

others, but I kept it my selfe alwaies
Solomon take his thousands for his
 of his vineyard, and the Reapers
 hundreds; I will not so doe, but tak
 the paines to keep my vineyard, and
 all the gaines of the fruits thereof to
 selfe. The meaning is, when Christ
 gathered all these Churches of the J
 Assyrians, Egyptians, and neight
 Nations, he will then keep his Ch
 with his mighty power, that neither
 gons, nor wilde Bores, nor Foxes
 hereafter root it up, or make havock
 as in time past they have done: T
 expresly foretold, and shall come to
 after the destruction of *Leviathan*
 great Turke*.

*Isa. 27. 1,
 —3.
 Verse 13.

*Thou that dwellest in the garden.
 companions hearken to thy voice, cause
 heare it.*

Thou that dwellest in the gardens.]
 Participle being of the Feminine ge
 sheweth that it is the Church not C
 that is here spoken to, who is sa
dwelt in the garden; to wit, in the
 cular Churches, as the sea dwelle
 each particular Countrey sea; the
 man sea, the Spanish sea, the Baltic

&c. So the Catholick Church is divided into particular Churches, or the Jewish Mother Church dwelleth by her authority and directions in all other Churches.

The companions hearkning to thy word (or voice) cause me to heare it.] So the words in the originall which implyeth either that Church would have the Mother Church of the Jews take care of all other Christian Churches, and give directions unto them, and yet not as unto her handmaids, but as to her companions; or else if the words be read according to the translation, *The companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it*: They imply, that after the calling of these Churches, this shall be their constant estate to the worlds end, as they shall all

First, embrace one another as companions, not claiming Romish Supremacy.

Secondly, hearken to the voice and directions of the Mother Church, (in *Solomons* daies for wisdom to him.)

Thirdly, continue in calling upon the Name of Christ without dissipation and interruption to the end.

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountain of spices.

Verse 14.

This

This is the prayer of all the Churches; now that all things are accomplished, the which Prophets and Apostles have fore-told, that Christ would hasten his last coming as swiftly and quickly, as the swiftest of the creatures, *the Roe, or young Hart*, to take them up with himselfe into the highest Heavens of the Mountaines of spices, where are all manner of spices, where are all manner of sweet and fragrant and pleasant things, even fulnesse of joy at Gods right hand for evermore. Thus is the end of the Revelations, *The Spirit and the Bride*, and every faithfull soule saith in like sense, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

The Use of this is, first, to teach us that the Nations of the Gentiles shall not be cast off from the fellowship of the Church, when the Jewes are called, as the Jewes were out of the Church, that the Gentiles might be grafted in*; but even after their calling, new Churches of the Gentiles shall be brought in; yea, their conversion shall bring from the dead into the world: *What shal the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* yea, the Gentiles shall bring their glory to it, yea, the

curfed

Psal. 16.
11.

Rev. 22.
17, 20.
Use 1.

* Rom. 11.
19, 20.

Rom. 11.
12, 15.

Rev. 21.
24.

curfed Canaanite ſhall not be excluded from partaking in this bleſſing *. How much more may we hope then that theſe Churches of Chriſtendome, which have ſuffered ſo much with Chriſt, and for him, under the Dragon, the Beaſt, and the Turk, ſhall partake with the glory of theſe Churches of the Jewes when the time ſhall come.

*Ezek. 16.
55, 60, 61.

Secondly, this doth teach us how to attaine fellowſhip and holy familiarity with Chriſt, even by faith, leaning upon him as our beloved ; infidelity and doubting hinder our ſweet communion with Chriſt, labour wee therefore to abandon it from us.

uſe 2.

Thirdly, wee may here ſee the duty of inferiour Magiſtrates what it is, even to ſee that the Church be raiſed up under them, how much more to countenance and protect it with their ſhadow , and to comfort it with the fruit of their ſweet and wholeſom lawes and examples ?

uſe 3.

Fourthly, this may ſerve for tryall of the goodneſſe of our affections to Chriſt ; if we thirſt after his deep affection to us, and continuall remembrance of us, if we labour to ſubdue our ſelves and all ours

uſe 4.

to him, if wee jealously warre again that which might impaire our love to him, if we burn up all our impediments, no afflictions can discourage us from following him, if no prosperity can shake our intimate loves after him, we are then well affected to him as this Church is: If we desire to have such deep place in Christs heart, is a plain signe Christ hath a deep love in our hearts.

use 5.

Fifthly, this may shew us a meanes to consume all base and kitchen-love lusts in us, set upon these sensuall worldly things; grow up in this spirituall love to Christ, and it will swallow up and consume these lesser fires; the greater will extinguish the lesser, as the Sun put out the kitchen fire; so this strong love of Christs love in us will burn up, and consume out all lust in us.

use 6.

Sixthly, this may comfort the Church and children of God, in assurance of their perseverance: if our love to him be so unchangeable, that many waters of afflictions cannot quench it, floods of temptations drown it; if so strong as death, that it will devour before it, how much more is his love to us.

Seve

Seventhly, this lets us see that the Churches that are well established themselves, must not contemne their weake neighbour-Churches, but take care, and se all good meanes for their establishment and growth: How farre should greater Churches be from cutting off the breasts, or breaking downe the walls of their small neighbour Churches?

use 7.

Eighthly, this may teach Magistrates to be as walls to keep out all disorder, and up as a wall if there come in disorders, stand so high that they cannot come over; if any would goe a begging, keepe them in, y^e restraine beggery, idlenesse, drunkenesse, whordome, and profanenesse, all evill courses; be as a wall, whereunto to reare a silver Palace for ever; hereon to lay the frame of a good motion, course, or order, to be taken for the publick good; any good motion made, to be made, is as a wall to divide equally to all men their right.

use 8.

Ninthly, this may teach Ministers to be as doores to open a wide entrance for the people to come to Christ; not as those Scribes and Pharisees, which

use 9.

* Luk. 12.
52.

which Christ complaines of *, who neither enter in themselves, nor wo suffer others: such are rather Portals, yea, gates of Hell.

Use 10.

Tenthly, this may let us see the duty of Magistrates; if Ministers be doore should be their care to hemme them with boards of Cedar, to provide their security: it is the duty of every Magistrate and member to hemme them that no enemy may be able to opp them, but that they may be without feare among them, as it is *, *See that Timothy without feare among you.*

* I Cor.
16. 10.

Use 11.

Eleventhly, this may let us see a Church enjoying a faithfull Ministry, and Christian Magistracy, enjoyeth a special favour from Christ.

Use 12.

Twelfthly, this lets us see what care Christ will one day have of his Church; though Lyons, Dragons, Beares have broken in upon the Church to devour it; and besides many Foxes have sought to subvert it, and to cut the sinewes of it asunder, yet when Christ shall take the government of it into his hands, there shall be no enemy to do violence to it: When the great Le

all be punished, even *Leviathan*
the Crooked Serpent, and the Dragon
 in the sea shall be slaine; *In that*
ye unto her, a vineyard of new wine;
 Lord will keep it, he will water
 moment, lest any hurt it, he will
 night and day; yea, Christ will
 free his Church from all oppres-
 sion and give free passage to all his ordi-

Isa. 27. 1,
 2.

ally, this serves to teach us all what
 we should have to the coming of
 to Judgement, to desire him to be
 as *or a young Hart upon the mountains*
 ; to take us up into the highest
 , where are all manner of sweet
 grant and pleasant things, *even*
of joy for evermore.

Use 13.

faithfull Spouses of Christ doe
 y desire his coming to Judge-
 out Harlots would put off his co-
 A chaste wife, and a loyall Spouse
 her husband to send no more let-
 t to hasten his returne, and come
 but a harlot would have her hus-
 coming deferred; so they whose
 are a whoring after the world, nei-
 fire Christs coming, nor love his
 appearing.

Psa. 16. 11.
 2 Tim. 4. 8.

appearing. That we may therefore
 and approve our selves to be the
 Spouses of Christ, desire his hasty
 ming, and say, as *Revel. 20. 20.* *Er*
come Lord Jesus, come quickly, A
The Lord work this good work and fra
grace in our hearts, for Jesus Christs
Amen. Alas who shall live when God
this? Numb. 24. 23.



FINIS.

